



EUROPEAN AGENDA

EU SETS UP BIGGEST CLIMATE FIGHT OF 2026 BY SLAMMING BRAKES ON CARBON MARKET

Brussels wants to let industry pollute more and for longer. Parliament and member countries will have some thoughts on that. The European Commission will ring the opening bell for the biggest climate bust-up of the year on Friday when it unveils an overhaul of the EU's carbon market.

The long-awaited revision will propose weakening the Emissions Trading System, the bloc's most powerful tool for tackling climate change, to allow heavy industry to emit more planet-warming emissions for longer.

The proposal is the latest example of a green backlash that has defined Brussels policymaking since 2024, when right-wing gains in European Parliament elections reoriented the entire bloc away from the European Green Deal's environmentalism towards industrial competitiveness.

Laws on petrol cars, corporate reporting, deforestation and greenwashing have all been watered down over the last year and a half, in major victories for the right.

But the ETS revision takes that trend to another level. No other policy is more important to the EU's goal of reaching zero emissions by 2050. The 20-year-old ETS, which forces companies to pay for every ton of carbon dioxide they emit, has been enormously successful, slashing emissions from factories and power plants by half over its lifetime.

"The EU ETS is the cornerstone of the EU climate architecture," wrote the center-left Socialists & Democrats in a letter to the Commission in July, defending the ETS. "Europe is the fastest warming continent. We have a responsibility but also an interest in maintaining strong climate action."

The proposal must now go to member countries in the Council of the EU and to the European Parliament to be debated, amended and eventually passed into law.

While many in both institutions will fight for its survival, some will fight to weaken the ETS further, fearing any self-imposed cost on European businesses is self-defeating, given few other jurisdictions around the world impose similar carbon prices on their industry (EU ETS carbon permits cost around €80 per ton of CO₂ at current prices). [Read more](#)

SOURCE: POLITICO PRO 16/07/2026

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AMONG THE GREATEST THREATS TO EU SECURITY

EU/INT Climate change and environmental degradation among the greatest threats to EU security

This is the conclusion of a document prepared by the European External Action Service (EEAS), approved on 8 July by the ambassadors of the 27 Member States to the EU and seen by Contexte. According to two diplomats, this 'assessment of the EU's strategic environment' is due to be adopted by foreign ministers on 14 July. In addition to Russia, China, organised crime and the race for "technological dominance" – particularly in artificial intelligence – the EEAS also highlights the impact of global warming, environmental degradation and natural disasters on the EU's security in the coming decades. These are "factors of instability and conflict". "Competition for natural resources, such as agricultural land and water, as well as the exploitation of energy resources for political ends, are concrete examples of this," the document states. The EEAS also cites global health crises. Finally, "the growing erosion of respect for international law" is an "increasingly pressing cross-cutting and

systemic issue”, as it “undermines the global and collective capacity to tackle these challenges together”.

SOURCE: CONTEXTE 15/07/2026

EU: IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, POLITICAL GROUPS AGREE ON THE URGENCY OF THE HEATWAVE CRISIS, BUT NOT ON THE SOLUTIONS.

MEPs expressed alarm at the heatwaves sweeping across Europe during a debate on 8 July. On the left, the S&D calls for “binding legislation to protect workers exposed to extreme heat” and a “genuine European adaptation plan”. The Greens are proposing an action plan on heatwaves, aimed in particular at equipping schools, hospitals, public transport and care homes to lower temperatures, and at drawing up recommendations on working in extreme heat, in addition to measures on energy and nature conservation. A plan funded by the largest companies in the fossil fuel sector. Many elected representatives from various political groups, particularly from southern countries which are more vulnerable to heatwaves, have emphasised the need for funding for adaptation.

On the right, the EPP also emphasised the urgency of the situation, whilst calling for nature legislation to be ‘amended’ to ‘enable rural communities to implement effective measures to prevent natural disasters’, in the words of Esther Herranz García. Among the Patriots, Ondřej Knotek, who is sceptical about the value of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, wants to “transfer funds” from the fight against global warming to adaptation.

SOURCE: CONTEXTE 15/07/2026

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

COMMISSION CLARIFIES RULES ON PLASTIC BOTTLES RECYCLING

The European Commission today adopted new rules on recycling of single-use plastic beverage bottles made primarily of polyethylene terephthalate (PET bottles). These rules establish, for the first time, a methodology to calculate, verify and report chemically recycled content. This is part of the Commission's December 2025 plastics package.

The new rules will ensure transparency in calculating recycled content in new single-use PET bottles. This is key to creating a level playing field and providing investment security for the plastic recycling sector. The new rules can be applied to any recycling technology, including chemical and mechanical recycling technologies. This will help Member States meet the recycled-content target set under the Single-Use Plastics Directive.

Mechanical recycling is currently the most widely used method for recycling plastics. This is typically used to sort, clean, shred and remold plastics into new products. However, some plastic waste streams cannot be effectively recycled mechanically. This includes for example plastic waste with food residues, additives and mixed materials which reduce recyclability. In these cases, chemical recycling can complement mechanical recycling. In contrast to mechanical recycling, chemical recycling breaks down plastics into smaller molecules, which can be reused for feedstocks for new plastics or other chemicals. This helps to return more plastic waste streams to the circular economy, including for products that have to meet high-quality standards like food-contact packaging. [Read more](#)

SOURCE: EC PRESS CORNER 30/06/2026

NEW E-COMMERCE DUTY FOR SMALL PACKAGES SET TO INCREASE FAIRNESS FOR EU BUSINESSES AND SAFETY FOR CONSUMERS

Starting today, the EU abolishes an outdated customs duty exemption for e-commerce packages worth less than €150. The measure will help to ensure fair conditions for EU businesses and safe choices for consumers, in response to the surge of billions of low-value e-commerce goods entering

the EU. Goods coming from third countries bought online and shipped directly to consumers will now pay a €3 customs duty per item.

The €150 customs duty exemption was designed for an era of occasional online purchases and less digitalised customs systems. This no longer fits reality, and its removal corrects a long-standing structural imbalance for EU enterprises. Across Europe, town high streets are becoming increasingly deserted, undermining local job opportunities and weakening community life. From an environmental perspective, the fast-paced e-commerce model contributes to packaging waste and carbon-heavy logistics, with frequent returns and long-distance shipping doubling transport pollution.

This measure restores fairness across importers, ensuring that EU retailers importing in bulk, and large-scale non-EU online operators compete under the same regulatory conditions.

European consumers are not responsible for paying the duties to the customs authorities.

Duties are collected by the customs authorities from the platforms, or any other business involved in the sale and transportation of the imported goods. Consumers buying online are therefore spared from additional payment at delivery. [Read more](#)

SOURCE: EC PRESS CORNER 3/07/2026

CLIMATE POLICY

PRESS RELEASE: EC - COMMISSION ADOPTS MEASURES TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF EU DEFORESTATION REGULATION

On 13 July the European Commission adopted measures on the product scope of the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) and the functioning of its Information System. Together with the amendments agreed last December, the updated Guidance document – available in the coming days in all EU languages – and Frequently Asked Questions, these measures will provide greater legal certainty and predictability for businesses and Member States while ensuring the Regulation can be applied effectively as of December 2026.

The [delegated act](#) updates and simplifies the list of products covered by the Regulation. Following stakeholder consultation, public feedback, and assessment with the methodology from the [Staff Working Document](#), cattle hides, skins, leather, re-treaded tyres, soybeans for sowing, articles of vulcanised rubber, conveyor and transmission belts, and aircraft and motor vehicle seats are removed from the scope of the Regulation. At the same time, soluble coffee, certain palm oil derivatives and frozen cattle tongues are added to the list of products. To allow businesses sufficient time to prepare, the new products added to the scope will become subject to the Regulation from 30 December 2027. The Delegated Act will now be sent to the European Parliament and Council for scrutiny before entry into force. [Read more](#)

SOURCE: EC PRESSCORNER 13/07/2026

COMMISSION THREATENS COUNTRIES WITH COURT: THE COMMISSION PUBLISHED A FRESH ROUND OF INFRINGEMENT PROCEDURES, THREATENING MULTIPLE COUNTRIES WITH COURT CASES OVER WASTE RECYCLING AND THE SINGLE-USE PLASTICS DIRECTIVE.

Don't be trashy: 12 member countries aren't doing enough to meet waste recycling targets, warns the EU executive. It has sent "reasoned opinions" — a final warning before referring countries to the Court of Justice of the European Union — to Bulgaria, Czechia, Greece, Spain, Croatia, Cyprus, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Portugal and Romania. Germany has received a first warning.

Plastic promises: Slovakia is in trouble for not properly integrating the Single-Use Plastics Directive into national law. Tobacco producers there aren't obliged to cover waste collection costs, for example, and

For contact: info@citpa-europe.org

producers of certain products, like food and beverage containers, still don't have to cover the costs of transporting and treating litter. Meanwhile, Spain has missed a deadline, by a whole year, to submit a report on implementing measures to comply with the Habitats Directive. Both Spain and Slovakia have two months to respond or they, too, could face a court case.

Slap on the wrist: The Commission has also opened infringement procedures across several other environmental laws and EU countries. It's calling on Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary and Slovakia, for example, to correctly transpose the Drinking Water Directive. It also warns France to comply with EU rules for collecting and treating urban wastewater and Finland to correctly implement the Waste Framework Directive. [Read more](#)

SOURCE: POLITICO PRO 09/07/2026
