



Council of the European Union

PRESS
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BACKGROUND¹
Brussels, 28 November 2019

**Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council
(Energy)
Brussels, 4 December 2019**

Chair: **Katri Kulmuni**, Minister for Economic Affairs of Finland

Starting time: 9:00

The Council will hold a **policy debate on smart sector integration**. The aim of the discussion is to provide the Commission with political guidance for its further work on sector integration and sector coupling.

This will be followed by an exchange of views on the **follow-up to the Communication on the draft national energy and climate plans** "United in delivering the Energy Union and climate action".

The third debate will be an exchange of views on the **energy policy priorities of the new European Commission**, provided that the Commission has entered into office.

The Any other business points will be taken in the afternoon, following an informal lunch debate.

Press conference: expected around 15:30

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[Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council \(Energy\) meeting page](#)

[Press conferences and public events by video streaming](#)

[Video coverage in broadcast quality \(MPEG4\) and photo gallery](#)

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¹ This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office.

SMART SECTOR INTEGRATION: PROMOTING CLIMATE NEUTRALITY

The Council will hold a policy debate on smart sector integration. Sector integration and sector coupling involve **greater integration between energy consuming sectors such as industry, transport and the buildings sector, and energy producers**. It goes hand-in-hand with further electrification, but can also provide solutions for continued use of gas infrastructure. Thanks to technologies such as power-to-gas, electricity from renewable sources could be used to produce hydrogen or synthetic gases, which would serve to store or transport energy and can be easily converted back into power or heat. This would allow for the use of renewable energy across the economy, as energy-intensive industries as well as the heating and cooling sectors would shift away from using fossil fuels. Smart sector integration is thus a **prerequisite for the decarbonisation of the economy** and for ensuring the stability and flexibility of energy systems.

On 25 June 2019, the Council adopted [conclusions on the future of energy systems in the Energy Union](#). In these conclusions, **the Council** highlighted the importance of sector integration and sector coupling. It **called on the Commission to "undertake an analysis of sector coupling and sector integration technologies**, including the production of hydrogen, in particular with regards to regulatory and market barriers and based on this analysis explore possible initiatives regarding the efficient integration and deployment of such technologies and energy carriers."

The **aim** of the policy debate is to **provide the Commission with political guidance** for its future legislative and non-legislative initiatives in this area. In order to guide the debate, the Presidency has prepared a [background paper](#). Ministers will be invited to respond to two questions:

- What is the role of the EU in enabling smart sector integration?
- Which regulatory and other barriers should be removed to accelerate smart sector integration?

[Council outlines principles and priorities for the future of energy systems in the Energy Union \(press release, 25/06/2019\)](#)

DRAFT NATIONAL ENERGY AND CLIMATE PLANS

The Council will hold an **exchange of views** on the follow-up to the Commission Communication on the draft national energy and climate plans "United in delivering the Energy Union and climate action". The debate will be guided by a [background paper](#) prepared by the Presidency.

The **national energy and climate plans (NECPs)** are a new instrument put in place by the Regulation on the governance of the energy union and climate action, which entered into force on 24 December 2018. The plans play a key role to **ensure that the EU fulfils its energy and climate targets** and that member states jointly work towards the objectives of the Energy Union.

Member states had to submit their draft NECPs by 31 December 2018. On 18 June 2019, the Commission presented its [Communication "United in delivering the Energy Union and climate action"](#) assessing the draft NECPs as a whole, accompanied by country-specific recommendations. The communication identified **gaps between the planned national contributions and the EU's 2030 targets for energy efficiency and renewable energy**, with a minor gap concerning renewables and a more significant one for energy efficiency.

During its meeting **on 24 September 2019, the Council held an exchange of views on this topic**, during which ministers were already invited to present updates to their draft NECPs and indicate any changes with regards to their national contributions for energy efficiency and renewable energy. The debate at this month's Council will be a follow-up to this exchange of views. The Presidency has invited ministers to comment on the finalisation of their NECPs with a focus on the following question:

Is there further progress that the Member States' can inform the Presidency and the Commission about, in addressing ambition gaps that have been identified in their draft national plans in the areas of energy efficiency and renewable energy?

Member states now have until the end of the year to submit their final NECPs. The exchange of views at Council level is part of an ongoing dialogue between the Member States and the Commission that aims to support the finalisation of the national plans and enabling the EU to collectively meet the 2030 targets.

[Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council \(Energy\), 24 September 2019](#)

[National Energy and Climate Plans \(European Commission\)](#)

[Regulation on the governance of the energy union and climate action \(EUR-Lex\)](#)

THE NEW COMMISSION'S ENERGY POLICY PRIORITIES

In her [letter to Commissioner-designate for energy, Kadri Simson](#), the President-elect of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, has outlined priorities for the energy sector in the next 5 years. Noting that **energy will play a central role in the project of a European Green Deal**, the mission letter focuses on developing the European energy market in order to ensure safe, secure and sustainable energy; and on empowering people and regions.

Commissioner-designate Simson will be invited to present the new Commission's energy priorities. This will be followed by an exchange of views (see the [Presidency note](#)).

This point will only be taken if the new Commission has taken office by the time of the Council.

[Commissioners-designate \(European Commission\)](#)

[Political guidelines for the next Commission \(2019-2024\) - "A Union that strives for more: My agenda for Europe" \(European Commission\)](#)

OTHER BUSINESS

Trilateral gas talks and the winter outlook for the security of gas supply

The Commission will present the current situation of the Russia-Ukraine talks regarding the gas transit contract, which expires at the end of the year. The Commission will also provide a general overview of the EU's preparedness for the winter in terms of gas storage and supply.

[Note from the Commission](#)

Regulation on tyres labelling

The Presidency will inform delegations about the state of play on the regulation on tyres labelling. A provisional agreement with the European Parliament was reached on this file on 13 November 2019. The analysis in Coreper took place on 22 November 2019.

[Presidency note](#)

[Labelling of tyres: Council endorses agreement to make labels more visible \(press release, 22/11/2019\)](#)

Debrief of the SET-Plan Conference

The SET-Plan Conference took place in Helsinki on 13-15 November 2019. It focused on research and innovation in the energy sector to enhance European industrial leadership. The Presidency will give a debrief from the conference.

[Presidency information note](#)

[Website of the SET-Plan Conference](#)

[Further information on the SET-Plan \(European Commission\)](#)

Recent developments in the field of external energy relations

The Commission will give an overview of recent events and developments in external energy relations.

[Note from the Commission](#)

Work programme of the incoming Presidency

The Croatian delegation will provide details regarding the work programme of the incoming Croatian Presidency of the Council.

[Note from the Croatian delegation](#)