

【欧州】 【Common】

Common - Environmental issues: The Czech Presidency's priorities regarding transport and environment and the “Fit for 55” Package

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【概要 : Summary】

In line with the EU's commitments under the Paris Agreement and based on the 2019 European Green Deal, the European Climate Law supports the 2050 goal of climate neutrality by introducing a new GHG emission reduction target of at least 55% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels. To achieve the 2030 55% GHG emission reduction target, the European Commission presented the “Fit for 55” Package on 14 July 2021 with 13 legal proposals, including new laws and revisions of existing legislation to reduce the transport sector's GHG emissions. These proposals are now on their way through the legislative procedure in the EU institutions. The European Parliament's responsible committees have worked on the amendments to the proposals while the European Parliament's plenary already voted on some of the proposals. At the same time, the Council of the European Union worked on a common position on the proposals. Consequently, the trilogue negotiations between the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission will be able to start in September 2022 on several of the “Fit for 55” Package proposals. These decisions taken in the trilogue negotiations will ultimately shape the EU's way forward on the GHG emission reduction measures in the transport sector for the next decades.

Since the Council of the European Union's presidency has changed on 1 July 2022 and considering the prospect that several of the “Fit for 55” proposals will be soon discussed in trilogue negotiations, the new Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union is expected to give top priority to this decision-making.

Regarding the transport sector, the Czech Presidency of the Council will focus on the current challenges, including the target to reducing GHG emissions in all modes of transport. The objective will be to achieve a maximum progress in negotiations on the “Fit for 55” Package of legislative proposals to reaching the agreed target of reducing GHG emissions by at least 55% by 2030.

Regarding the efforts to securing the EU's energy supply, which is one of the areas most affected by the Russian war in Ukraine, the EU's target to reduce GHG emissions by 55% by 2030 and to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 has only gained importance in this new geopolitical environment. Based on the REPowerEU Action Plan, the Czech Presidency's priorities will include measures for ensuring stable and accessible energy supplies and cost-effective decarbonisation.

【記事 : Article】**1. The “Fit for 55” Package**

The transport sector is currently responsible for almost 25% of the EU’s total GHG emissions. Out of these 25%, the majority of 71% comes from road transport, followed by aviation (14.4%), ships (13.5%), trains (0.5%) and others (0.5%) (General Secretariat of the Council 2022). The European Green Deal of 11 December 2019 (COM/2019/640 final) sets the target to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 and a 90% reduction of GHG emissions from transport. The European Climate Law, Regulation (EU) 2021/1119 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 June 2021 establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulations (EC) No 401/2009 and (EU) 2018/1999 “European Climate Law”), establishes a framework for achieving the European Green Deal’s target by introducing a mid-term target of reducing GHG emissions by 55% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels (European Commission n.d.). To achieve this mid-term target, the European Commission presented a “Fit for 55” package on 14 July 2021 with 13 legal proposals, including some new laws and revisions of existing transport sector related legislation.

The proposals include an extension of the EU-ETS to maritime transport and buildings, and other laws to incentivise the reduction of GHG emissions, in particular in road transport.

Regarding the CO₂ emissions performance standards for new passenger cars and vans, the proposal COM (2021) 556 final presented by the Commission includes a set of CO₂ emission standards for new passenger cars and light commercial vehicles that are expected to reduce GHG emissions by at least 55% for the fleet-wide CO₂ emissions of passenger cars by 2030 compared to 1990 levels, and 50% for vans. This 2030 target would be followed by a 100% fleet-wide CO₂ emission reduction target for new passenger cars and vans from 1 January 2035 onwards (COM (2021) 556 final).

Regarding the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation (AFIR) (COM/2021/559 final) proposal of 14 July 2021, the main objective is to ensure sufficient access to an infrastructure network for recharging or refuelling road vehicles, aircraft, ships, and barges with alternative fuels (General Secretariat of the Council 2022). The AFIR sets concrete targets for deploying such infrastructure in the EU in the upcoming years to provide alternative solutions of power supply (COM (2021) 559 final). Therefore, the AFIR proposal is most important for speeding up the deployment of all zero- and low-emission infrastructure for the adoption of alternative fuels in the transport sector.

The European Commission also proposed the ReFuelEU Aviation initiative (COM (2021) 561 final) under the “Fit for 55” package to increase the share of renewable and sustainable fuels in aviation. The ReFuelEU Aviation (COM (2021) 561 final) will introduce a sector-specific increasing blending mandate for sustainable aviation fuels (SAFs) and a sub-mandate for synthetic fuels to be supplied to airlines (COM (2021) 561 final).

The proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the use of renewable and low-carbon fuels in maritime transport and amending Directive 2009/16/EC (COM(2021) 0562) supports the shift towards low carbon maritime fuels by setting up a common EU regulatory framework to increase the share of renewable and low-carbon fuels in the fuel mix of international maritime transport (COM (2021) 0562 final).

2. The Council of the European Union’s general approaches and European Parliament’s votes on “Fit for 55” package proposals

On 2 June 2022, the Council of the European Union adopted at its Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council the general approaches on some of

the legislative proposals of the “Fit for 55” Package. The included the adoption of the general approach regarding the AFIR (COM (2021) 559 final), the FuelEU Maritime (COM (2021) 0562 final) on renewable and low-carbon fuels in maritime transport, and the adoption of the general approach on the ReFuelEU Aviation proposal (COM (2021) 561 final) (Council of the European Union 2022b). On 29 June 2022, the Council also adopted its general approach on the new emission standards for new passenger cars and vans (COM (2021) 556 final).

The Council’s general approach adheres the Commission’s proposal on AFIR that the new infrastructure will have to allow ad-hoc charging, accept electronic payments, and clearly inform users about pricing options (General Secretariat of the Council 2022). Regarding ports, in the busiest seaports, there should be supplied access for at least 90% of container ships and passenger ships to have access to shore side electricity supply. In most of inland waterway ports, there should be provided at least on shore-side electricity installation by 2030. Regarding the aviation sector, the AFIR Regulation may continue to explore the need to install electricity supply at airports e.g., for stationary aircraft. At airports, there should also be supplied electricity for all aircraft next to the terminal by 2025 and all remote apron position stands by 2030, with exemptions for airports with fewer than 10,000 flights per year (General Secretariat of the Council 2022).

Following the Council of the European Union’s agreement on a general approach on the ReFuelEU Aviation proposal COM (2021) 561 final on 2 June 2022, the European Parliament’s Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN Committee) adopted its draft report on the proposal on 27 June 2022, and on 7 July 2022, the European Parliament’s plenary adopted the ReFuelEU Aviation proposal including several amendments, which will go beyond the original European Commission proposal.

The European Parliament agreed on higher mandatory SAF blending levels, reaching 85% of all aviation fuel in EU airports by 2050, compared to the 63% for 2050, as proposed by the Commission. This can be expected to cause controversies with the Council, which mainly flowed the targets set in the Commission’s proposal.

To reduce the GHG emissions of the maritime transport sector, the European Commission presented the FuelEU maritime proposal COM (2021) 562 final. The proposal also seeks to accelerate the sector’s decarbonisation with the uptake of low-carbon fuels. However, while the Council already reached a general approach on the FuelEU Maritime proposal (COM (2021) 0562 final), the planned vote in the TRAN Committee meeting on 11-12 July 2022 was postponed to its meeting in October rather than to its next Committee meeting, which takes place on 31 August 2022, or the meeting on 26 September 2022. Moreover, it is still unclear if the TRAN Committee will in fact vote on the proposal in October. In fact, it will depend on this next step to allow the European Parliament to vote in Plenary on the FuelEU maritime proposal COM (2021) 562 final. According to the European Parliament’s forecast, the 17 October 2022 is set as indicative Plenary sitting date for the dossier. Accordingly, also the trilogue negotiations with the Council and the Commission on a compromise version of the law on FuelEU Maritime could be even further postponed. In contrast, regarding the proposal to revise the CO₂ emissions performance standards for new passenger cars and vans COM (2021) 556 final, the European Parliament’s plenary adopted its position on the revision of the CO₂ emissions performance standards for new passenger cars and vans COM (2021) 556 final on 8 June 2022. The MEPs supported the European Commission’s proposal to reach zero-emission road mobility by 2035 and a 100% reduction of CO₂ emissions of newly registered passenger cars and light commercial vehicles by 2035, compared to 2021.

This was followed by the adoption of the general approach by the Council of the European Member States on 29 June 2022. Also, the Council agreed to introduce a 100% CO₂ emissions reduction target by 2035. However, the Council also added a clause for allowing to register vehicles running exclusively on CO₂ neutral fuels such as synthetic fuels (e-fuels), derived from the combination of hydrogen, electricity, and CO₂ captured from industrial processes. This clause deviates from the target to completely abolish combustion engines from 2035 onward if the fuel used is considered carbon neutral.

While the Council's general approach is closer to the idea to keep an open approach regarding technologies that allow to achieve carbon neutrality, the European Parliament supports a complete ban of combustion engine vehicles from 2035 onwards. It remains to be seen what final compromise the Council and the European Parliament will be able to find in their trilogue negotiations on this issue.

With the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament having already agreed their respective position on several proposals of the Fit for 55 Package, the trilogue negotiations between the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission are expected to start in September 2022 on several proposals. These trilogue negotiations will start at a crucial time as the Council of the European Union's presidency has changed on 1 July 2022.

3. The Programme of the Czech presidency of the European Council

Several of the "Fit for 55" Package's legislative proposals will be negotiated in the trilogue negotiations during the current Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union. With the start of the Czech Presidency, the Czech Republic published its programme for its presidency in the next six months. The programme describes in detail the priorities and main

directions of the presidency in the period from 1 July till 31 December 2022. Since the European Parliament together with the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union will decide on the way forward regarding the measures to reduce the GHG emissions of the transport sector in the next decade, it is of importance to consider the Czech Presidency's priorities as they might have an impact on the decision-making process in the trilogue negotiations.

Against the backdrop of the impacts of the Corona Pandemic and the Russian war against Ukraine, which both have caused the interruption of global supply chains and exposed the fragility of the European economy and energy supply, among others, the objectives of the Czech Presidency regarding the transport sector are highly influenced by these current challenges. The Czech Presidency will support the EU's efforts to defend Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity by using all instruments and programmes offered by the EU, including the strengthening of sanctions (Czech Presidency n.d.).

The Czech Presidency's general objectives define five priority areas that have arisen from a discussion at the highest political level. They include the managing of the refugee crisis and post-war reconstruction of Ukraine, energy security, the strengthening European defence capabilities and cybersecurity, the strategic resilience of the European economy and the resilience of democratic institutions (Czech Presidency n.d.).

Next to the political priorities, the Czech Presidency defines the priority sectoral agendas, i.e., the legislative and non-legislative proposals that the Czech Republic will focus on under the relevant Council formations. The Czech Presidency will put emphasis on the EU's energy security issues, and on the accelerated implementation of REPowerEU, for the diversification of sources including logistics, energy savings and acceleration of the transition

to low-emission and renewable energy sources with the aim to remove the dependence on Russian fossil fuels. As the “Fit for 55” Package creates the basis for decarbonisation, in the field of transport, the Presidency will concentrate on reducing emissions, promoting environmentally friendly modes of transport and the infrastructure for alternative fuels, as a key prerequisite for the development of clean mobility. At the same time, it will focus on the development of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) to facilitate transport flows across Member States, while supporting the decarbonisation of transport (Czech Presidency Consilium 2022).

Since the Czech Republic holds the Presidency of the Council until the end of 2022, it already held meetings with the European Parliament Committees in July and will hold meetings in September 2022 to inform the European Parliament on its priorities. On 11 July 2022, the Czech Environment Minister Anna Hubáčková informed the European Parliament’s MEPs on the priorities including the target to reaching agreements on the “Fit for 55” files, among others. The MEPs questioned the minister on preparations for the UN conferences on climate change (COP27) and biodiversity (COP15), as well as on the Russian war’s impact on the environment (European Parliament 2022).

On 12 July 2022, the Czech Transport Minister Martin Kupka, and Deputy Prime Minister for Digitisation and Minister of Regional Development Ivan Bartoš, held a meeting with the TRAN Committee, explaining the Czech Presidency’s focus on measures to decarbonise transport, promote railways, make sure solidarity lanes for Ukraine are working and increase the resilience of the tourism sector (European Parliament 2022). Minister Kupka promised MEPs that the work on new rules on the alternative fuel infrastructure, sustainable fuels for aviation and maritime sectors, intelligent transport systems and TEN-T

revision would advance (European Parliament 2022). The Transport Committee MEPs urged the Presidency to put more efforts into addressing mobility poverty and road safety, and to make sure EU countries would unite in response to any possible new COVID-19 pandemic, among others (European Parliament 2022).

4. The Czech Presidency’s priorities regarding transport and environment

Regarding the pending decision in the transport sector, the Czech Presidency intends to focus on the reduction of emissions in all modes of transport and it will specifically focus on legislation on the introduction of infrastructure for alternative fuels as this is the basis of decarbonising the transport sector. The proposal on the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation (AFIR) is a top priority of Czech Presidency, as it is a key legislation for the development of clean mobility (Czech Presidency Consilium 2022).

The focus is on promoting clean mobility and emission-free fuels to meet climate targets in transport, but the presidency also focuses on connected and autonomous mobility and multimodal ticketing (Czech Presidency Consilium 2022). The Czech Presidency will also address the Intelligent Transport Mobility Systems as part of the Efficient and Green Mobility package, by discussing the revision of the Directive on the framework for the deployment of Intelligent Transport Systems in the field of road transport. Furthermore, the Czech Presidency focuses on achieving a general approach in the revision of the Regulation on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network (TEN-T), which represents an opportunity to further develop road, but also rail and water infrastructure, which are necessary for decarbonising transport (Czech Presidency 2022). It also addresses the interoperability of charging and payment systems across the EU and

the provision of electricity at airports and ports (Czech Presidency Consilium 2022).

Regarding air transport, the Czech Presidency will focus on the trilogue negotiations with the European Parliament on the proposal for a Regulation on a level playing field for sustainable aviation (ReFuelEU Aviation) and on the revision of the Single European Sky framework (Czech Presidency Consilium 2022). In maritime transport, the proposal for a Regulation on the use of renewable and low-carbon fuels in maritime transport (FuelEU Maritime) will be discussed, besides the conclusions in the field of inland navigation to promoting inland waterway transport in Europe.

Regarding the energy sector, the Czech presidency's priorities are most affected by the Russian aggression in Ukraine. Considering Russia's unilateral moves to restrict gas supplies, the EU is committed to strengthening its energy security and ending its dependence on Russian fossil fuel imports by the end of the decade (Czech Presidency 2022).

Following its efforts to end import dependence on fossil fuels from Russia, the European Commission presented the REPowerEU Communication, and the REPowerEU Action Plan, which aims to increase the EU's energy security and to diversify its resources ahead of the upcoming winter. The REPowerEU plan will be one of the key priority topics of the Czech Presidency (Czech Presidency Consilium 2022).

Considering the agenda of the Environment Council, it is largely influenced by the documents and proposals published following the Communication on a Green Deal for Europe to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. Internationally, the Czech Presidency will be involved in several international negotiations and events, including the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27). At EU level, the Czech Presidency will have its priority on achieving maximum progress in negotiations regarding the "Fit for 55"

Package proposals (Czech Presidency Consilium 2022). This includes the revision of the EU-ETS Emissions Trading Directive and the revision of the Regulation setting CO₂ limits for new passenger cars and light commercial vehicles, among others.

As for the COM (2021) 556 final proposal, the Czech Presidency will start trilogue negotiations and try to negotiate a political agreement as close as possible to the compromise agreed at the Council level. This includes to allowing a revision in 2026 according to technological developments and social impacts as well as selling cars using sustainable alternative fuels after 2035, as agreed in the Council's general approach on the proposal (Czech Presidency Consilium 2022).

The progress in the negotiations of the "Fit for 55" Package is also important for rapidly reducing the EU's dependence on imports of energy commodities from the Russian Federation in the context of the REPowerEU package (Czech Presidency Consilium 2022).

In the first month of the Czech Presidency, it has already achieved several successes, including the approval of proposals by ministers of the Member States, an agreement at ambassador level, and negotiations with the European Parliament (Czech Presidency 2022). The greatest success was achieved by Czech negotiators at the end of July in negotiating an agreement on gas demand reduction from the presentation of the Commission's proposal (Czech Presidency 2022).

5. Conclusion

Considering the importance of the "Fit for 55" Package to make the necessary revision of transport legislation to reduce GHG emissions for achieving the envisaged reduction of 55% of GHG emissions by 2030, it is important that the Czech Presidency will aim at a target-oriented discussion with the European Parliament in the trilogue negotiations on the final versions of

the legislation, as this legislation will shape the future measures of GHG emission reduction in the EU's transport sector.

It is also important to keep these negotiations as efficient and short as possible as the legislation needs to come into force soon to give all stakeholders the time to introduce changes in the view of the 2030 target of a 55% emission reduction.

On 2 June 2022, the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council adopted its general approach on three of the transport-related “Fit for 55” Package proposals, namely the Regulation on the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure (COM/2021/559 final) proposal, the Renewable and low-carbon fuels in maritime transport (FuelEU Maritime) COM (2021) 562 final proposal and the ReFuelEU Aviation initiative (COM (2021) 561 final) proposal (General Secretariat of the Council 2022). The general approaches adopted on 2 June 2022 will allow the Council presidency to start negotiations with the European Parliament in the trilogue negotiations once the European Parliament has adopted its positions.

The Parliament and Council will have to agree their position on the ReFuelEU Aviation file soon, with trilogue negotiations set to commence in September 2022.

Regarding the legislative proposal on new CO₂ emissions performance standards for new passenger cars and vans (COM (2021) 556 final), the European Parliament and the Council of the EU Member states have agreed on their respective positions in June 2022. The end of the fossil fuel based internal combustion engines seems to be in the interest of both, the Parliament, and the Council. However, the trilogue negotiations might become difficult regarding the role of electro-fuels because some Member States want to keep engines running on CO₂ neutral fuels such as synthetic fuels (e-fuels), derived from the combination of hydrogen, electricity, and CO₂ captured from industrial processes to remain as an option for cars and

vans. While the European Commission is asked to prepare a report by 2026 that will investigate the feasibility of technologies such as “plug-in hybrids” and “CO₂ neutral fuels” to meet climate aims, this aspect might lead to some controversial discussions between the Council and the Parliament.

However, there are also some concerns due to a delay in the voting in the European Parliament, as some of the legislative proposals are still on their way through the Committees. This counts in particular for the important FuelEU Maritime (COM (2021) 0562 final) proposal, which is planned to be voted on in plenary only by mid-October 2022. This translates into a delayed start of trilogue negotiations with the Council, although Member States already agreed on their position on the file in early June 2022. It could become one of the major issues under the Czech Presidency in the field of transport to reach a compromise with the European Parliament on this and other proposals before the end of the year.

The compromises brokered by the Council under the Czech Presidency and by the European Parliament in the upcoming trilogue negotiations will ultimately shape the EU's ability to significantly reduce the GHG emissions in the transport sector in the next decades.

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