European Green Deal: Commission proposes certification of carbon removals to help reach net zero emissions

Brussels, 30 November 2022

Today the European Commission adopted a proposal for a first EU-wide voluntary framework to reliably certify high-quality carbon removals. The proposal will boost innovative carbon removal technologies and sustainable carbon farming solutions, and contribute to the EU's climate, environmental and zero-pollution goals. The proposed regulation will significantly improve the EU's capacity to quantify, monitor and verify carbon removals. Higher transparency will ensure trust from stakeholders and industry, and prevent greenwashing. Carbon removals can and must bring clear benefits for the climate, and the Commission will prioritise those carbon removal activities which will provide significant benefits for biodiversity. Moving forward, the Commission, supported by experts, will develop tailored certification methods for carbon removal activities delivering on climate and other environmental objectives.

To ensure the transparency and credibility of the certification process, the proposal sets out rules for the independent verification of carbon removals, as well as rules to recognise certification schemes that can be used to demonstrate compliance with the EU framework. To ensure the quality and comparability of carbon removals, the proposed regulation establishes four QU.A.L.I.TY criteria:

1. **Quantification**: Carbon removal activities need to be measured accurately and deliver unambiguous benefits for the climate;
2. **Additionality**: Carbon removal activities need to go beyond existing practices and what is required by law;
3. **Long-term storage**: Certificates are linked to the duration of carbon storage so as to ensure permanent storage;
4. **Sustainability**: Carbon removal activities must preserve or contribute to sustainability objectives such as climate change adaptation, circular economy, water and marine resources, and biodiversity.

This proposal is essential to the EU’s goal of becoming the world’s first climate-neutral continent by 2050. To achieve this goal, the EU needs to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to a minimum. At the same time, the EU will have to scale up the removal of carbon from the atmosphere to balance out emissions which cannot be eliminated.

Industrial technologies, such as bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS) or direct air carbon capture and storage (DACCS), can capture carbon and store it permanently. In agriculture and forestry, carbon farming practices can sustainably enhance the storage of carbon in soils and forests or reduce the release of carbon from soils, and create a new business model for farmers and foresters. Long-lasting products and materials, such as wood-based construction products, can also keep carbon bound over several decades or longer.

Today’s proposal will promote cutting-edge clean technologies and support the New European Bauhaus by recognising the carbon storage capacity of wood-based and energy-efficient building materials. The proposal will enable innovative forms of private and public financing, including impact finance or result-based public support under State aid or the Common Agricultural Policy. The Commission will continue funding carbon removal action on the ground through the Innovation Fund (which can finance BECCS and DACCS projects, among others), the Common Agricultural Policy, the Regional Development Fund, the LIFE programme and the Horizon Europe programme (including the Mission ‘A Soil Deal for Europe’).

**Next steps**

The Commission proposal will now be discussed by the European Parliament and the Council, in line with ordinary legislative procedure. Based on the QU.A.L.I.TY criteria, the Commission will develop tailored certification methodologies for the different types of carbon removal activities, supported by
an expert group. The first meeting of the expert group is planned for the first quarter of 2023.

**Background**

The European Green Deal is the EU's long-term growth strategy to make Europe climate-neutral by 2050. The European Climate Law, signed in 2021, makes it legally binding for the EU to achieve a balance between greenhouse gas emissions and removals by 2050, and to achieve negative emissions thereafter. It also includes an ambitious 2030 climate target of at least 55% reduction of net emissions of greenhouse gases as compared to 1990. Today's proposal for carbon removal certification is therefore crucial to achieve the EU's long-term climate objectives under the Paris Agreement and make the European Green Deal a reality.

Today's proposal builds upon the Commission's Communication on Sustainable Carbon Cycles adopted in 2021. It will help to achieve the EU's ambitious target of 310 Mt of carbon removals in the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) sector by 2030, and promote nature restoration activities in line with the Nature Restoration Law and circular economy practices from the Circular Economy Action Plan. It will help companies report on their climate footprint in accordance with the Corporate Social Responsibility Directive and the related Sustainability Reporting Standards, and it will provide more transparency on climate neutrality claims by public and private organisations.

**For More Information**

- Q&A on carbon removals certification
- Factsheet on carbon removal certification
- Proposal for a Regulation on an EU certification for carbon removals
- Impact Assessment Report of the Proposal
- Press release on Sustainable Carbon Cycles (December 2021)
- More information on Sustainable Carbon Cycles
- Delivering the European Green Deal

**Quotes:**

"Today's proposal for an EU certification of carbon removals is a historic step in our fight against the climate crisis. To reach climate neutrality we need to sharply reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but we also need to remove carbon from the atmosphere. With our Fit for 55 package, work is ongoing to turn down the big tap of greenhouse gas emissions as fast as we can. Now, we set the regulatory framework to simultaneously incentivise carbon removals via technologies or natural carbon sinks. This has great potential for biodiversity as well. Certified carbon removals create new business opportunities for farmers, foresters and land managers eager to go the extra mile for climate and environment."

Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice-President for the European Green Deal - 30/11/2022

**Press contacts:**

- Tim McPHEE (+32 2 295 86 02)
- Ana CRESPO PARRONDO (+32 2 298 13 25)

General public inquiries: Europe Direct by phone 00 800 67 89 10 11 or by email