

Europe squabbling over greenhouse gas targets

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The sun is seen through dark clouds in Klanxbuell, northern Germany, on December 7, 2013

European nations stand sharply divided over setting new 2030 targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions blamed for global warming, EU sources said Friday.

European Commission head Jose Manuel Barroso called in commissioners to try to agree figures ahead of talks on January 22 but

there was no progress, one source said.

Parliament's environmental and energy committees on Thursday called for a 2030 reduction target of 40 percent for [carbon dioxide emissions](#), based on 1990 levels.

In addition, they want renewable sources to account for 30 percent of the energy mix while efficiency should be improved 40 percent.

"The 40 percent CO2 reduction is not agreed yet," the source said.

"Barroso and (EU Climate Change Commissioner) Connie Hedegaard are fighting against (Energy Commissioner) Guenther Oettinger who wants to fix it at 35 percent," said the source, who asked not to be named.

Germany's Oettinger has the support of Business Europe which groups all the EU's industrial associations.

Business Europe head Emma Marcegaglia said in a letter to Barroso that the new climate and energy package must be carefully considered, with a "realistic target."



Cooling towers at the Neurath coal-fired power station at Grevenbroich near Aachen, southern Germany on September 11, 2012

It should also be "compatible with the imperative need of strengthening our industries and restoring Europe as a place for industrial investment," Marcegaglia said.

Crucially, the "EU should move away from the three overlapping targets... which cause inefficiencies, lead to additional regulatory burdens and increase energy prices," she said.

Instead, there should be just one target, for CO₂ emissions reduction, Marcegaglia said in the letter posted on the group's website.

In 2008, the EU agreed a 20-20-20 programme with a deadline of 2020 and it is this scheme which is being updated to fix new 2030 targets.

Many of the EU's 28 member states have reservations about various parts of the proposals.

Britain, France and Spain for example oppose increasing the target for renewable energy use because this could reduce the amount of nuclear power in their programmes, the source said.

In contrast, Germany, which is closing down its nuclear power industry in light of the 2011 Fukushima, backs the 30 percent renewables target.

Many MEPs and environmental groups have attacked the Commission, the EU's executive arm, for being too timid when it should be taking a firmer line ahead of the UN's climate conference in September.

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