

UK vows to slash emissions by more than three-quarters by 2035

April 20 2021, by Joe Jackson



A decommissioned coal-powered plant in northern England underscores the country's bid to cut carbon emissions by 78 percent by 2035

Britain on Tuesday vowed an ambitious 78 percent cut to carbon emissions by 2035, but faced calls for more policy specifics from sceptical environmental groups ahead of US-led summit talks.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced his latest legally binding target, which is 15 years earlier than once planned, ahead of staging COP26, the

UN's annual [climate](#) gathering, in Glasgow in November.

On Thursday, Johnson will also address a [climate summit](#) hosted by US President Joe Biden, as he attempts to make Britain a world leader on the issue.

"We want to continue to raise the bar on tackling climate change, and that's why we're setting the most ambitious target to cut emissions in the world," he said in a statement.

"We want to see world leaders follow our lead and match our ambition in the run-up to the crucial climate summit COP26, as we will only build back greener and protect our planet if we come together to take action."

The UK has set a target of becoming carbon neutral by mid-century and has already ramped up its targets.

In December, it unveiled plans to cut [greenhouse gas emissions](#) by more than two-thirds, compared to 1990 levels, this decade.

Britain's [carbon dioxide emissions](#) have already halved since 1990, taking the country half-way to its prior 2050 commitment, according to a study released last month.



Britain's carbon dioxide emissions have already been reduced by half since 1990 according to a study released in March

But environmental group Friends of the Earth said the UK government is "struggling to meet its existing, less ambitious climate goals".

"Targets for cutting emissions are important, but without the right policies they simply won't be achieved," it added.

'Hard work begins'

The latest 78 percent reduction target for the middle of the next decade was among the recommendations made last year by the UK government's

independent advisory body, the Committee on Climate Change (CCC).

For the first time it will also cover emissions from international aviation and shipping, a long-standing demand of environmental activists.

The CCC noted there would have to be more [electric vehicles](#), an extension of offshore wind power generation, a reduction in meat and dairy consumption, and the planting of new woodland.

Britain has vowed to quadruple offshore wind power capability within the next decade, and plans to ban sales of petrol and diesel vehicles from 2030.



Greenpeace UK says it is easier to set targets than to meet them, and adds: "So the hard work begins now"

However, Johnson's government has faced persistent criticism that its rhetoric on [climate change](#) has not been matched by meaningful policies.

A flagship subsidy scheme to help improve homes' energy efficiency was withdrawn recently after a chaotic rollout.

Environmentalists are also furious ministers said last month that they could license further oil and gas drilling in the North Sea.

Meanwhile, controversy has swirled for months around a planned deep-coal mine in northwest England. The government performed a U-turn in March by saying it would intervene to review whether it should go ahead.

Greenpeace UK said the latest emissions commitment could be the boldest global pledge to come this week, as Biden's virtual summit gets underway, but warned "targets are much easier to set than they are to meet".

"So the hard work begins now," its head of politics Rebecca Newsom said.

"In order to actually deliver on this commitment, new measures to slash emissions from homes and transport should already be well under way," she added.

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