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of 18 December 2023

on the consistency of Belgium's measures with the Union's climate-neutrality objective and with ensuring progress on adaptation

(Only the French and Dutch texts are authentic)

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 292 thereof,

Having regard to 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 ([1]), and in particular Article 7(2) thereof,

Whereas:

(1) Pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2021/1119 (the European Climate Law), the Commission is required to assess the consistency of national measures with the climate-neutrality objective and with ensuring progress on adaptation. The Commission assessed the consistency of Belgium's measures with these objectives ([2]). The below recommendations are based on that assessment. Belgium should take due account of the present recommendations and follow up on them in accordance with the European Climate Law.

(2) While the Union's net greenhouse gas emissions (including from land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) and excluding international transport) show a steady downward trend overall, broadly in line with the linear trajectory achieving the Union's 2030 climate target of -55 % and the Union's 2050 climate-neutrality objective, the pace of emission reduction needs to accelerate and action by Member States is essential. Progress across Member States has been mixed with several sectoral challenges and weaknesses that need to be remedied without further delay. Reliable long-term strategies are the cornerstone for achieving the economic transformation needed to move towards the Union's climate-neutrality objective.

(3) The most vulnerable communities are those with elevated likelihood of being impacted by climate change. Unequal exposure and vulnerability to climate impacts of different regions and socioeconomic groups worsens pre-existing inequalities and vulnerabilities. Just resilience should reduce the unequal burden of climate risk and ensure equity in the distribution of the benefits of adaptation. In Belgium the region of Wallonia and the federal government did not report having made progress in engaging particularly vulnerable stakeholders in adaptation policy design and implementation,

HEREBY RECOMMENDS THAT BELGIUM TAKES ACTION TO:

Consistency of national measures with the climate-neutrality objective

1. Update and increase the ambition and quality on the national long-term strategy, by clarifying Belgium's long-term climate-neutrality goal, and by substantiating Belgium's emission reductions and enhancement of removals targets in individual sectors with credible policies and measures.

Consistency of national measures with ensuring progress on adaptation

2. Continue to engage stakeholder groups that are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change in Belgium's adaptation policy design and implementation. Document the processes and outcomes of such consultations.

([1]) OJ L 243, 9.7.2021, p. 1.
([2]) EU Climate Action Progress Report 2023, COM(2023) 653 final, and Commission Staff Working Document Assessment of progress on climate adaptation in the individual Member States according to the European Climate Law, SWD(2023) 932.

Done at Brussels, 18 December 2023.

For the Commission
Wopke HOEKSTRA
Member of the Commission