

Brussels, 18.12.2023
C(2023) 9627 final

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

of 18.12.2023

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

(Only the German text is authentic)

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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) 2018/1999¹, 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 Austria's measures with these objectives². The below recommendations are based on that assessment. Austria 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. The assessment, based on the available information, shows that progress towards the Union's climate-neutrality objective appears insufficient for Austria. Reliable long-term strategies are the cornerstone for achieving the economic transformation needed to move towards the Union's climate-neutrality objective.
- (3) Updated national energy and climate plans in accordance with Article 14 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council³ are

¹ OJ L 243, 9.7.2021, p. 1.

² COM(2023) 653 final, EU Climate Action Progress Report 2023, 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.

³ Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action, amending Regulations (EC) No 663/2009 and (EC) No 715/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council, Directives 94/22/EC, 98/70/EC, 2009/31/EC, 2009/73/EC, 2010/31/EU, 2012/27/EU and 2013/30/EU of the European Parliament and

essential for a Member State to take steps to enable the collective achievement of the climate-neutrality objective and ensure continuous progress on adaptation in line with the European Climate Law. However, Austria has not submitted a draft update of its latest notified integrated national energy and climate plan.

- (4) The first step in strengthening the ambition on adaptation should be adopting an appropriate legal framework for national climate policy that sets up binding, regularly updated adaptation goals to measure overall progress in building resilience. Strong adaptation strategies and plans are needed to ensure that societal, political and economic preparedness advances steadily in line with the European Climate Law and gets ahead of the climate related impacts. To assist Member States in updating and implementing comprehensive national adaptation strategies, plans and policies the Commission adopted a set of guidelines in July 2023⁴. Various EU funding instruments can be mobilised to fund adaptation. Climate resilience considerations should be put in the forefront when Member States design their national plans under the relevant EU funds. None of the spending should do harm to adaptation: that is, increase vulnerabilities either for the beneficiaries or for others.
- (5) 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 socio-economic 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. Private stakeholders are agents of change by providing information, resources, capacities, and funding,

HEREBY RECOMMENDS THAT AUSTRIA TAKES ACTION TO:

Consistency of national measures with the climate-neutrality objective

1. Step up climate mitigation efforts, by making tangible progress on the existing and planned policies and consider additional, urgent measures to align the expected greenhouse gas emission reductions and projections with the climate-neutrality objective.
2. Update and increase the ambition and quality on the national long-term strategy, including by substantiating Austria's emission reductions and enhancement of removals targets in individual sectors with credible policies and measures.
3. Submit the draft update of its latest notified integrated national energy and climate plan as provided for in Article 14 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1999, with a view of an assessment of its consistency with the climate-neutrality objective.

Consistency of national measures with ensuring progress on adaptation

4. Establish an appropriate legal framework for climate change adaptation policy and action. Update the national adaptation strategy so that climate adaptation considerations are integrated in key vulnerable sectors, and that gaps and barriers to adaptation are addressed. Put climate resilience considerations more to the forefront in the use of support from EU funding programmes, such as the common agricultural policy, cohesion policy funding and other relevant EU funds. EU funds should be spent in such a way that they increase climate resilience and do not increase vulnerabilities (i.e. do no significant harm to adaptation).

of the Council, Council Directives 2009/119/EC and (EU) 2015/652 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 525/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council, OJ L 328, 21.12.2018, p. 1.

⁴ Commission Guidelines on Member States' adaptation strategies and plans 2023/C 264/01, OJ C 264, 27.7.2023, p. 1–31.

5. Continue to engage stakeholder groups that are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change in Austria's adaptation policy design and implementation. Involve social partners and private sector stakeholders in policy design, implementation, and investments. Document the processes and outcomes of relevant consultations.

Done at Brussels, 18.12.2023

For the Commission
Wopke HOEKSTRA
Member of the Commission