



April 2022

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S AMBITION FOR ITS OWN GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS REDUCTION BY 2030 IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EU'S 2030 TARGET

This factsheet provides technical details on the retroactive estimates of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, from 2019 to 2005, that have been used to set the overall ambition of a 60% GHG emission reduction for 2005 to 2030 (section 1). It also looks at how this level of ambition relates to the EU 2030 target of 55% reduction of GHG emissions with respect to 1990, as defined in the Climate Target Plan (CTP¹) (section 2).

1. Estimates of the Commission's greenhouse gas emissions from 2005 to 2019, and overall level of ambition from 2005 to 2030

The Communication on Greening the Commission covers the activities under the 2019 EMAS scope². It also uses the 2019 EMAS data³ as a reference point for future reporting, measurement and comparison, since these data are the most representative of the Commission's activities: 2019 is the last year before the COVID pandemic changed the Commission's way of working.

However, to illustrate the Commission's overall progress, the Communication uses the first year of EMAS registration as baseline: 2005.

Extending the Commission's emissions data series to 2005

The 2005 EMAS scope was more limited than that for 2019, for example commuting, business travel, fixed emissions from assets were not included, and several sites were not formally part of the EMAS system although basic information relating to building's operation was often available. To estimate the progress made from 2005 to 2019, retroactive calculations were necessary.

Each EMAS site⁴ was asked to review their activities back to 2005, on the basis of the 2019 scope, using available data, local knowledge and recent trends, and considering technological evolution and political measures in place. The Commission processed and harmonised the data, and used extrapolations where data was missing. This was based on expert advice from internal auditors who considered input from a range of official sources such as the Agence de la transition écologique (ADEME) and the European Aviation Safety Agency⁵.

Where the extrapolation involved a high degree of uncertainty, conservative assumptions were made, such as a 2% annual reduction in waste generation, lower than what was achieved in Brussels (the biggest Commission's site) from 2014 to 2019⁶.

The resulting Commission's CO₂ equivalent emissions profile shows that the Commission reduced its total emissions under the 2019 EMAS scope from approximately 297 Kt CO₂eq in 2005 to 189 Kt CO₂eq in 2019, and they are expected to be 121 kt CO₂ eq in 2030⁷.

Overall level of ambition: approximately 60% GHG emission reduction from 2005 to 2030

Annex B of the Communication on Greening the Commission describes the levels of ambition for different activities that were set through consulting the relevant services. This results in a projected reduction of approximately 38% of GHG emissions between 2019 and 2030⁸. Taking into account the estimation of GHG emissions in 2005 as calculated above, the overall reduction for the period 2005-2030 corresponds to approximately 60%. The overall level of ambition was therefore set to 60% GHG emission reduction from 2005 to 2030.

¹ COM/2020/562 final

² The Communication also integrates experts' travel, for whom the Commission bears the costs for travel under its administrative budget. This activity is not yet integrated in the EMAS scope.

³ The Commission published annually its environmental results, see at: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/emas_registrations/emas_in_the_european_institutions_en.htm

⁴ Commission EMAS sites: Brussels, Luxembourg, Ispra (Italy), Geel (Belgium), Petten (The Netherlands), Karlsruhe (Germany, Seville (Spain) and DG SANTE at Grange (Ireland)

⁵ In particular their [2019 Report](#) covering several years.

⁶ Per capita reduction in non-hazardous waste generation averaged nearly 4% in this period.

⁷ This does not take into account experts travel emissions as it was not feasible to provide an estimate for 2005. The 2005 figure is for information purpose only and cannot be considered as verified and audited under the EMAS framework.

⁸ Estimates for experts travel emissions are included in this figure.

2. How does the European Commission’s 2030 target of 60% reduction in GHG emissions with respect to 2005 relate to the EU 2030 target of 55% reduction with respect to 1990 as defined in the Climate Target Plan?

The Member State targets are based on the direct emissions figures and projections used in the assessment of EU climate policy, including the Climate Target Plan (CTP) that underlies the 2030 EU target, whereas the Commission’s target was set using the corporate EMAS reporting, as a basis for discussions with Commission services. In addition, the scope of the Commission’s activities and emissions cannot be directly compared to those of a Member State or the EU-27: this is because the scope of Commission activities and emissions is defined at an organisational level, while a different approach would apply for a Member State or the EU27. Consequently, a direct one-to-one sectoral comparison between Commission and EU targets for 2030 is not meaningful.

However, for transparency and communication purposes, a best estimate comparison was made between the Commission’s target, and the EU 2030 target, adjusted to a common reference year of 2019.

Figure 1 shows the European Commission targets and the CTP emission reduction projections for 2030 with respect to the 2019 level (the emissions from Commission operations having been attributed to the corresponding CTP sectors).

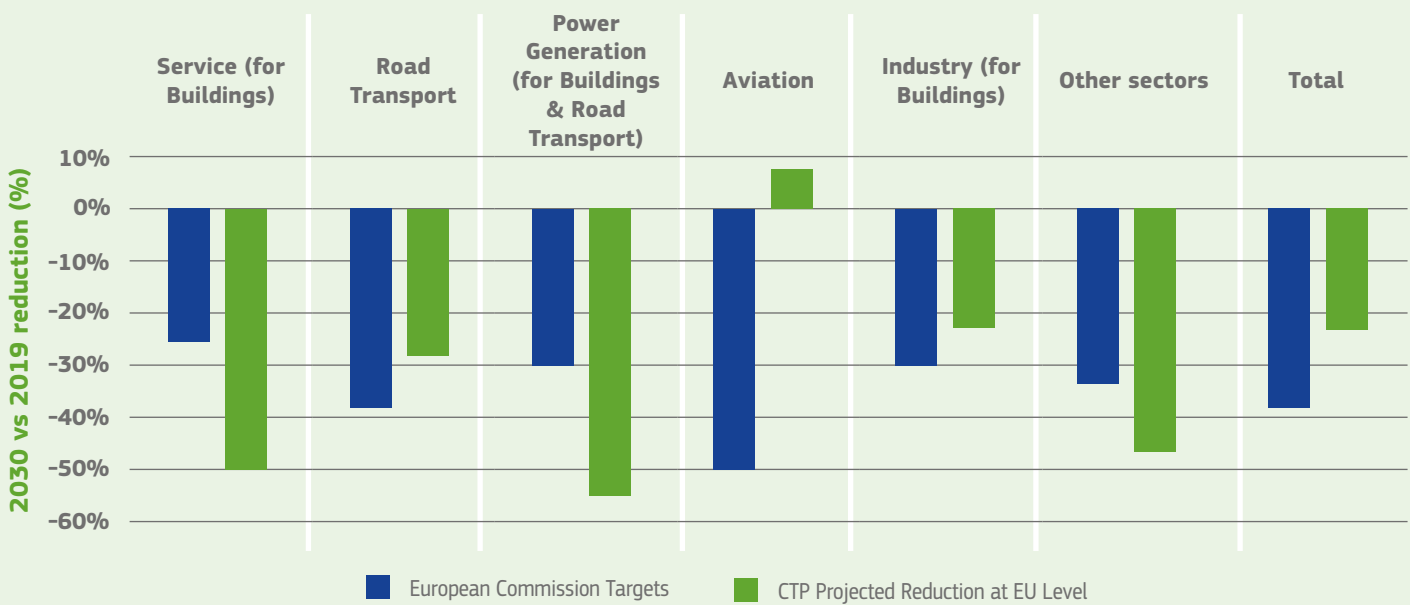


Figure 1 Best estimate comparison of European Commission targets and CTP projections at EU level for GHG emission reduction in 2030 vs 2019

With respect to 2019, the total ambition level of the Commission (38%) is higher than the one projected at EU level (23%) for the concerned sectors.

The sector breakdown shows a “lower ambition” in the EMAS building category (split between service, power generation and industry sectors of the CTP). This is largely the result of the strong efforts already made to reduce the carbon footprint of the Commission building portfolio: between 2005 and 2019, the per capita building emissions were reduced considerably (approximately 65% reduction)⁹, despite the increase in staff numbers under two consecutive EU enlargements. Together with the specificity of the Commission’s building portfolio that includes technical facilities, this limits the remaining potential for reducing emissions from Commission buildings. As stated in the Communication, the Commission will follow the best available standards to reduce the carbon footprint of its buildings.

Conversely, when considering figures in the transport sector, especially for aviation (corresponding mostly to the category of staff business travel), the analysis shows that the Commission has “higher ambition” (-50%) than the CTP which foresees limited increasing emissions in the aviation sector.

In conclusion, overall, when buildings, transport and other categories are combined, the Commission’s planned reductions are higher than the CTP EU target, confirming its strong commitment to corporate carbon neutrality.

⁹ Based on backward projections to evaluate the 2005 buildings carbon footprint including fixed assets, we estimate that between 2005 and 2019, the reduction of the per capita carbon footprint of Commission buildings in Brussels was approximately 65%. This figure is for information purpose only and cannot be considered as verified and audited under the EMAS framework.