EUROPEAN COURT OF AUDITORS

EN

Press Release

Luxembourg, 19 September 2017

EU must cut emissions and also adapt to climate change, warn Auditors

Effective action on energy is essential to tackle climate change, according to a new landscape review of EU Action on Energy and Climate Change published by the European Court of Auditors. Energy production and use account for 79% of EU greenhouse gas emissions, say the auditors. Even if efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions are successful, adapting to changes in the climate is necessary. By the end of the century, Europe's climate will be significantly different even under the temperature increase of no more than 2°C envisaged by the 2015 Paris agreement.

The landscape review provides an overview of EU action; summarises key audit work by the European Court of Auditors and EU national audit institutions; and identifies the main challenges, in order to inform both the legislative debate and future audit work.

Energy and climate change are closely interlinked, say the auditors, since energy production from fossil fuels and energy use by transport, industry, households and agriculture jointly account for 79% of EU greenhouse gas emissions. Many of these issues are best dealt with by Member States working together and are high on the EU's agenda.

"*The EU needs to cut greenhouse gas emissions and also adapt to the changing climate. Current projections show that more progress is needed to reach the 2030 targets and the 2050 objectives in cutting greenhouse gas emissions. It will also be a great challenge for the EU and Member States correctly to anticipate and plan adaptation, reducing the need to act late, in response to events, which would cost more*," **said Phil Wynn Owen, the Member of the European Court of Auditors responsible for the review**.

In the energy field, say the auditors, an important part of EU action is the establishment of an internal market to allow the free flow and borderless trade of gas and electricity across the EU. The internal energy market aims to deliver the EU's energy policy objectives of delivering affordable, competitively priced, sustainable and secure energy in a cost-effective way. Despite significant progress in some regions of the EU, the internal energy market has not yet been achieved.

On climate change, most EU action is focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The EU has set targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20% and 40% respectively for 2020 and 2030. By 2050,

The purpose of this press release is to give the main messages of the landscape review by the European Court of Auditors.
The full review is on www.eca.europa.eu.

ECA Press

Mark Rogerson – Spokesperson **T: (+352) 4398 47063** **M: (+352) 691 55 30 63**
Damijan Fišer – Press Officer **T: (+352) 4398 45410** **M: (+352) 621 55 22 24**
12, rue Alcide De Gasperi - L-1615 Luxembourg
E: press@eca.europa.eu **@EUAuditors** **eca.europa.eu**

the EU intends to reduce EU greenhouse gas emissions by between 80% and 95% compared to 1990. Approaches to cutting greenhouse gas emissions vary across sectors. With its Emissions Trading System, the EU has set a limit on overall emissions from some sectors of energy supply, energy-intensive industries and intra-EEA flights. By creating a marketplace for emissions quotas, it has "put a price" on carbon. Elsewhere, the approach has been to cut emissions by means of reduction targets for each Member State.

The EU's 2030 and 2050 emissions reduction targets and objectives will not be achieved without significant additional efforts, say the auditors, and all economic sectors will need to contribute. To achieve the 2030 targets, annual emission reduction efforts will need to increase by half in the next decade. The most significant change, though, will be required beyond 2030, when the emission reduction rate will need to outpace historic levels by three to four times in order to achieve the 2050 objective.

The 2013 EU Adaptation Strategy encourages Member States to take action; but it does not make action mandatory.

269 EU and Member States audit reports have been consulted. In the energy field, despite the rapid growth in renewables and decline in their costs globally, audits have found a lack of cost-effectiveness and obstacles to investments. Cost-effectiveness has regularly been identified as an issue in energy efficiency audits. In the field of nuclear energy, audits have found significant cost increases and delays. Audits have also shown that the shift to low-carbon transport is not taking place sufficiently. In the area of adapting to climate change, audits have focused mainly on flooding. Here, auditors found issues in flood prevention, protection and response.

Some key areas have, so far, seen limited audit work, such as adaptation to climate change, EU and national greenhouse gas inventories, emissions from road transport and emissions from agriculture.

The landscape review identifies seven main challenges: Energy and climate change governance; Evidence-based policy; The energy transition; Using research and innovation effectively; Planning for and tackling adaptation; Financing; and Involving EU citizens.

Note to Editors

By 2071-2100, Europe's climate will be significantly different from that of the 1961-1990 period under a 2°C temperature increase compared to pre-industrial levels. The 2°C increase scenario is a global average: even if it is achieved, temperatures will increase by far more than 2°C in certain regions. By 2071 to 2100, winter temperatures could increase by an average of 5 to 8°C in some parts of Scandinavia, compared with 1961 to 1990 temperatures. In the summer, temperatures could increase by an average of 3 to 4°C in most of Spain and in northern Scandinavia. By 2071 to 2100, winter precipitation could increase by more than 25% in some parts of central Europe and Scandinavia, compared with 1961-1990. Summer precipitation levels could decrease by more than 50% on much of the EU's Mediterranean coast.