

# LETTER TO EU INSTITUTIONS ON THE IEA NET ZERO REPORT AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR FOSSIL GAS IN THE EU CLIMATE TAXONOMY

Brussels, 23 September 2021

Dear President von der Leyen,

Dear Executive Vice-President Timmermans,

Dear Executive Vice-President Dombrovskis,

Dear Commissioner McGuinness,

Dear Ambassadors to the European Union,

Dear Members of the European Parliament,

The publication of the International Energy Agency's (IEA) [Net Zero by 2050 Roadmap for the Global Energy Sector](#) in May 2021 was a watershed moment for global climate action. The report maps out concrete milestones that need to be met to enable a 2050 world with net zero emissions and limit global temperature rise to 1.5 °C.

**The IEA report finds that in order to limit global temperature increase to 1.5°C, we must ensure:**

- **No investment in new fossil fuel supply beyond projects committed in 2021:** As the Executive Director of the IEA put it: *“there is no need for new oil, gas and coal development, which includes no need for oil and gas exploration investments.”*
- **Zero-emission electricity:** Electricity generation must be 100% zero-emission in the OECD by 2035, and globally by 2040. This means a phase out of all oil and gas-fired power plants within the same timeframes (while coal-fired power has to be phased out sooner).
- **For heating, there are no new fossil fuel boilers sold from 2025.**

These IEA findings confirm once and for all that **new gas investments cannot be deemed compatible with a 1.5°C pathway**. In addition, given that the average lifespan of gas-fired plants is 25 years, it makes clear that **there is no room in the EU and OECD's carbon budget for any new fossil gas-fired plant producing power and/or heat to be installed between now and 2035**.

This has serious implications for the EU taxonomy: given that there is no room for new gas power in the IEA 1.5°C scenario, **gas cannot be included in the EU sustainable finance taxonomy**, which itself refers to a 1.5°C pathway in both its Article 10(2) on transitional activities and Article 19 on technical screening criteria.

Finally, it should be noted that the IEA's findings on fossil gas are fully consistent with the Commission's own [Impact Assessment for the 55% climate target](#), which finds that **EU gas consumption needs to be cut by around 30% by 2030** and that gas supply to residential buildings must fall even faster, by 44%.

**With COP26 nearing, we call on you not to include fossil gas in the EU sustainable taxonomy: it would ruin the taxonomy's credibility<sup>1</sup>, undermine the European Green Deal, and send a disastrous global signal at odds with the urgent need for climate mitigation efforts.**

The US is already aiming for clean power by 2035, which is consistent with the IEA report. The EU must not send a signal, with its own taxonomy, that goes in the opposite direction.

The Annex of this letter provides more evidence on electricity and heat sectors from the IEA Net Zero report.

Please do not hesitate to ask us any questions you may have. With our best regards,

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<sup>1</sup> Concretely, the Commission should adhere to the 100 g CO<sub>2</sub>/kWh threshold set by the first Delegated Act for power and heat.

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## Annex: Excerpts from the IEA Net-Zero Emissions Scenario (NZE)

- “Fossil fuel use falls drastically in the Net-Zero Emissions Scenario (NZE) by 2050, and no new oil and natural gas fields are required beyond those that have already been approved for development.” (Page 99)
- “In buildings, bans on new fossil fuel boilers need to start being introduced globally in 2025, driving up sales of electric heat pumps” (Page 19)
- “By 2050, electricity provides 66% of energy use in buildings (33% in 2020). Natural gas use for heating drops by 98% in the period to 2050.” (Page 99)
- “Fossil fuel use in the buildings sector declines by 96% and space heating energy needs by two-thirds to 2050, thanks mainly to energy efficiency gains” (Page 143)
- “Space heating is transformed in the NZE, with homes heated by natural gas falling from nearly 30% of the total today to less than 0.5% in 2050” (Page 145)
- “High efficiency electric heat pumps become the primary technology choice for space heating in the NZE” (Page 145)

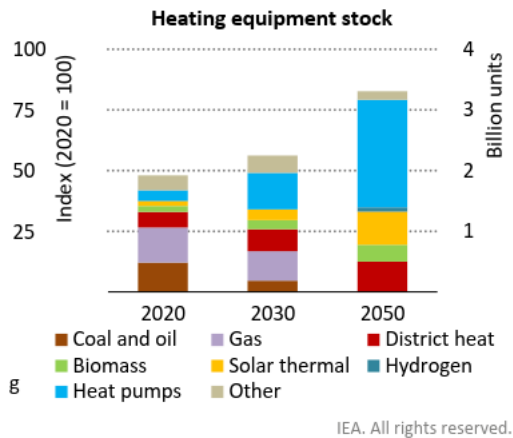
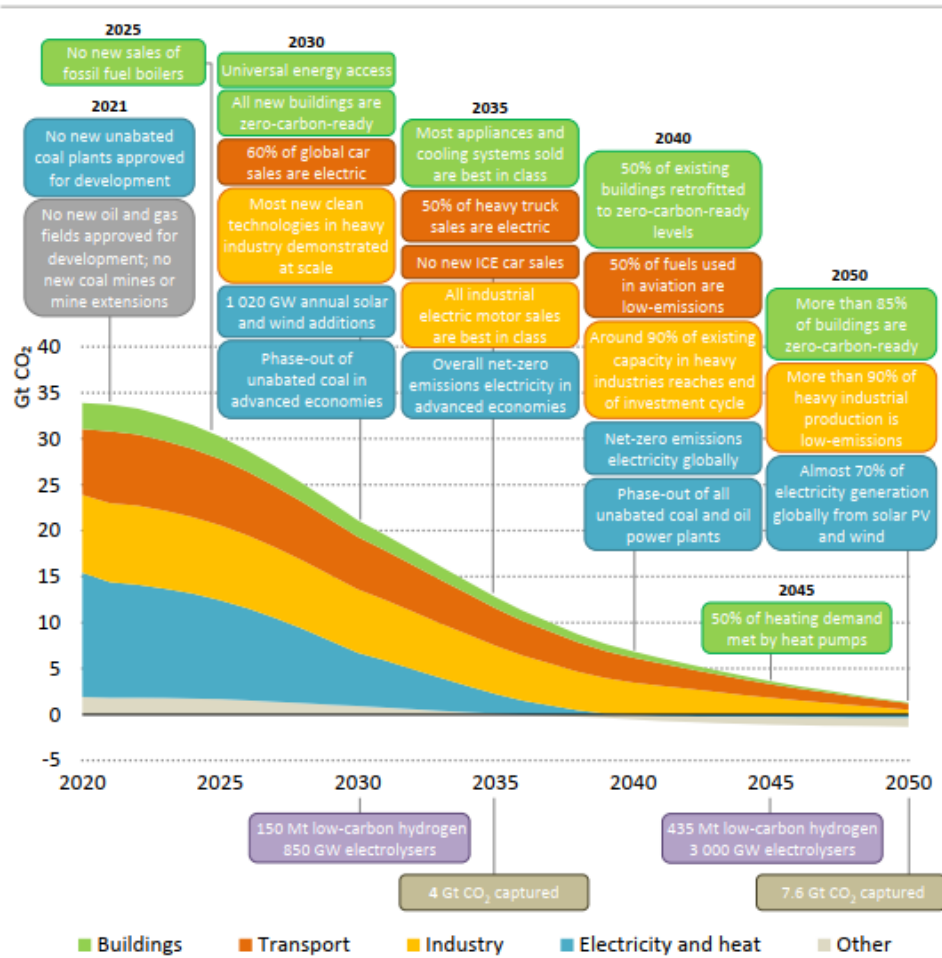


Figure 3.29 page 145

IEA overview of global milestones for electricity and heat (blue colour) and other sectors

**Figure 4.1** ▶ Selected global milestones for policies, infrastructure and technology deployment in the NZE



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