



TUESDAY 5<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2017

## **CLIMATE CHANGE ADVISORY COUNCIL CALLS FOR URGENT NEW MEASURES TO REDUCE CARBON EMISSIONS**

Ireland is not on track to meet its 2020 targets or to decarbonise its economy by 2050, according to the Climate Change Advisory Council's first Annual Review.

"The actions in the current National Mitigation Plan do not put Ireland on a pathway to achieve our 2020 targets or our long term decarbonisation objective," said Chair of the Council, Professor John FitzGerald.

The Council's first Annual Review considered national greenhouse gas inventory data from 1990-2015. The Review states that if Ireland does not introduce major new policies and measures it will miss its 2020 targets and, on its current trajectory, will also miss the proposed 2030 EU target and the objective of reducing emissions of carbon dioxide by at least 80% by 2050. The provisional greenhouse gas emissions data released last week by the EPA show continued increases in emissions across the Irish economy in 2016.

The Council said that the pace and scale of greenhouse gas emissions reductions needed to be accelerated across all sectors of the Irish economy.

In the Annual Review, the Council is tasked with assessing Ireland's progress on the long-term low-carbon transition to 2050. While the Review found some progress had been made in the built environment and the energy sectors, Professor FitzGerald said:

"Ireland is still over-reliant on fossil fuels. For example, Ireland has the third highest emissions per capita for residential energy use in the EU, reflecting high dependence on oil, coal and peat. This has significant implications for both greenhouse gas emissions and air quality, and it has significant negative impacts on health. A clear medium-term strategy to phase out fossil fuels in the electricity, transport and residential sectors is required."

"There is an urgent requirement for new policies and measures, and action beyond what is committed to in the National Mitigation Plan if Ireland is to reduce emissions by 2020 and to move onto a sustainable path to 2050 to tackle climate change," said Professor FitzGerald.

"These new measures should include a substantial increase in the carbon tax, and a phasing out of coal and peat for both residential heating and power generation. In particular, the subsidy for peat-fired electricity generation should be ended. In transport, investments in public transport fleets should avoid fossil fuel lock-in while overall capital investment should be rebalanced away from roads towards public transport," said Professor FitzGerald.



The Council said incentivising the take-up of electric vehicles over the coming decade will be vital in moving Ireland to a sustainable growth path and it recommended an assessment of the adequacy of the current electric vehicle charging network. Improved planning to minimise commuting in the future will also be crucial. The Council emphasised that the agriculture sector needed to urgently adopt and implement all cost-effective measures. The goal of carbon neutrality in the agriculture sector needs to be defined and policies put in place to achieve it.

The Council's Review of the emissions data shows that Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions increased by 3.7% in 2015, illustrating that Ireland's economy and emissions have not been decoupled, with emissions increasing across all key sectors.

The Council is an independent statutory body, established under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015. Its role is to review national climate policy and advise government on how Ireland can move to a low carbon, climate resilient economy and society by 2050.

The full report will be available for download at [www.climatecouncil.ie](http://www.climatecouncil.ie)

The Periodic Review Report, published in July, set out the Council's views in more detail, with a range of recommendations for the development of the Government's National Mitigation Plan. The Periodic Review Report is available at: [www.climatecouncil.ie](http://www.climatecouncil.ie)

**Ends**

**For further information please contact:**

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## **Important Note**

In this Annual Review, the Climate Change Advisory Council has reviewed progress towards transition based on analysis of data from 1990 to 2015 and projections from 2016 to 2035 released in April 2017. Provisional data for 1990 to 2016 released by the EPA last week was not considered in this Annual Review.

The Annual Review 2017 is mandated under Section 12 of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015. The Act outlines that the Council should conduct a review of the most recent national inventory and projections of greenhouse gas emissions prepared by the EPA, of progress made towards achieving greenhouse gas emissions reductions and in furthering the transition to a low-carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy.

## **Editor Notes**

The Climate Change Advisory Council is an independent, statutory body established under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015. Its role includes the provision of advice to Government on national policy relating to climate change. It was formally established in January 2016.

At its meeting on the 19th October 2017, the Climate Change Advisory Council took the decision not to print hard-copies of reports. Therefore, only electronic copies will be available from its website.

## **Climate Change Advisory Council Members**

Prof John FitzGerald, Chair of the Climate Change Advisory Council

Laura Burke (Director General, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); ex-officio)

Prof Alan Barrett (Director, Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI); ex-officio)

Jim Gannon, (CEO Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI); ex-officio)

Prof Gerry Boyle, (Director of Teagasc; ex-officio)

Prof Ottmar Edenhofer, (Deputy Director and Chief Economist at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK))

Prof Frank Convery (Chief Economist, Environmental Defence Fund, New York)

Prof Peter Clinch (Jean Monnet Chair of European Economic Integration and Professor of Public Policy at University College Dublin)

Prof Anna Davies (Professor of Geography at Trinity College Dublin)

Prof Alan Matthews (Professor Emeritus of European Agricultural Policy at Trinity College Dublin)



Joseph Curtin (Senior Research Fellow, at the Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA)).

### **Climate Change Advisory Council Adaptation Committee Members**

Prof John FitzGerald, Chair of the Adaptation Committee

Mark Adamson (Head of Flood Relief and Risk Management Division, Office of Public Works (OPW))

Prof Gerry Boyle, (Director of Teagasc)

Laura Burke (Director General, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA))

Prof Robert Devoy (Professor in Physical Geography and Emeritus Professor in Geography University College Cork (UCC))

Jim Gannon (CEO Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI))

Ciarán Hayes (Chair of the County & City Management Association (CCMA) Committee on Climate Change)

Dr Ina Kelly (Consultant in Public Health Medicine, Health and Wellbeing, Health Service Executive (HSE))

Eoin Moran (Director, Met Éireann)

Dr Conor Murphy (Lecturer in the Department of Geography at Maynooth University)

Roger Street (Technical Director United Kingdom Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP) Environmental Change Institute, Oxford University)