

Resolution of the Riigikogu

General Principles of Climate Policy until 2050

The Riigikogu decides on the basis on subsection 20 (1) of the State Budget Act:

I. The vision and national target of climate policy

1. In 2050, Estonia will be a competitive economy with low carbon dioxide emissions. The preparedness and capacity of the state to minimise the negative effects and maximise the positive effects of climate change has been ensured.

2. The transition to a low-carbon economy and society is developing into a global trend with one indicator being the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The long-term target of Estonia is to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases by 2050 by 80% in comparison with the emission levels of 1990. As the country moves towards this target, emissions will be reduced by about 70% by 2030 and by 72% by 2040 in comparison with the 1990 emission levels.

II. Political guidelines for the economy as a whole

3. Estonia will be transformed into an attractive environment mainly for the development of innovative technologies, products and services reducing the emission of greenhouse gases. In addition, the export and global implementation of such technologies, products and services shall be facilitated for the resolution of global problems. Green growth areas with great export capacity and economical and ecological potential shall be identified and prioritised, their development shall be consistently supported by shaping a favourable regulatory environment and facilitating access to funding. For example, the criteria of the state's support measures for companies consider the targets of climate policies and if possible, prefer alternatives with low carbon dioxide emissions.

4. To shape the climate-friendly attitudes and choices of consumers as well as companies, the awareness of the society of the mitigation of climate change and adaptation to its effects will be increased. Knowledge, skills and attitudes related to climate change will be more thoroughly addressed on all levels of education and non-formal environmental education. The public sector will act as a role model by taking environmental measures, including the implementation of environmental management and environmentally sound procurement procedures in state institutions. Furthermore, the creators and users of best practices will be acknowledged.

5. Economic growth will be unseparated from the use of primary raw material by developing resource-efficient circular economy while considering the goals of sustainable development, mainly the principles of sustainable production and consumption. On the basis of waste hierarchy, the reduction of waste production will be continued and the separate collection of waste will be made more efficient. In production, the use of primary raw material will be reduced and the use of secondary raw material will be increased, and the principles of ecodesign and universal design will be implemented. The implementation of novel business models, including models based on the recovery, sharing, and renting of resources, will be facilitated.

6. Estonia, among other developed countries, contributes to the cross-border mitigation of climate change and adaptation to its effects within the framework of development cooperation, including, if possible, the best know-how of the country. The existing and future flexible mechanisms will be implemented to increase the cost-efficiency of climate targets.

III. Sectoral policy guidelines for the mitigation of climate change

ENERGY AND INDUSTRY

7. When planning energy consumption centres and new production capacities and managing consumption and production, the efficient interaction of the system as a whole is the main principle. The placement of the industrial sector, including directly related business and service sector companies, near energy production units will be enhanced and connecting major consumers and manufacturers with the electricity grid will be encouraged via a supportive legal environment. It is important to reduce the percentage of losses during the transfer of energy to an economically justifiable technical minimum.

8. In manufacturing processes, the implementation of technologies with a low emission factor of CO₂ and efficient use of resources will be facilitated. A more efficient use of resources throughout the production cycle will be facilitated in industrial enterprises. With the help of legislation, the industry is motivated to mainly use fuels and production input with low carbon dioxide emissions.

9. The economic and energy efficiency of the system as a whole will be considered when renovating the existing building stock and planning and constructing new buildings with the aim of achieving a maximum energy efficiency of the entire current building stock. The awareness of real estate owners will be increased and possible market obstructions will be identified when renovating the building stock. Thereby, it is also important to achieve synergy between energy-related and socio-economic regional development paths. The possibility and cost-efficiency of applying different funding options will be considered for renovating the building stock, for increasing the energy efficiency of existing business and production facilities and for constructing new energy-efficient buildings.

10. When planning, building, managing and reconstructing grids within energy systems, the economical and energy efficiency of the complete system will be considered with the aim of achieving maximum energy and resource efficiency. Legislation will be used for facilitating efficient and sustainable operation of energy and heat networks on the basis of free market principles, and all market participants who have joined the network can freely buy and sell energy in the network without discriminating limitations. Smart network technologies and consumption control technologies will be developed and their implementation will be facilitated in the context of increasing market volatility and increasing the variability of energy sources.

11. In the use of oil shale, the industry will move towards enhancing energetic value and the production of products with higher additional value to minimise the emission of greenhouse gases in the oil shale treatment process in a way that does not entail an increase in other negative environmental impacts. The retort gas produced as a by-product to shale oil production will be used to produce energy and heat, while in the longer perspective, the aim is to produce a maximum amount of replacement products for liquid fuels, natural gas, etc. from retort gas.

12. Major participants in the energy and industry sectors will be directed towards a successful and cost-efficient reduction of greenhouse gas emissions while continuing the use of market-based mechanisms. Participation in the European Union Emissions Trading System and improving its efficiency will be continued until there are more cost-efficient ways for achieving

the desired results. The implementation of novel tax policy instruments for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in sectors and installations which do not belong to the EU's Emissions Trading System will be considered under the condition that it is purposeful, cost-efficient, and economically reasoned.

13. The gradual wider exploitation of domestic renewable energy sources in all sectors of final consumption will be facilitated with a view to increase the welfare of the society and the need to ensure energy security and security of supply. A wide use of domestic bio and other kinds of renewable energy resources will be facilitated during the production of electricity and heat as well as the production of fuel for transport.

14. For limiting the emission of greenhouse gases in the energy sector and industry, the preferred research, development and innovation fields will facilitate the development of efficient energy technologies and upcycle domestic renewable energy resources to the maximum extent, increase the saving of primary energy and reduce the emission of greenhouse gases. Among other things, the development of renewable energy production technologies and knowledge-based, ecological and sustainable upcycling of biomass will be facilitated. It is also important to develop technologies that reduce the carbon intensity of the current industry, and grid related technologies and the use thereof.

TRANSPORTATION

15. The need for forced traffic and dependence on personal cars will be reduced through well-integrated planning of settlements and transport management. In addition, energy-efficient traffic culture will be advanced. A well-functioning transportation system will be facilitated and forced traffic will be reduced through the integration of the planning of settlements and transportation and the design and implementation of mobility plans.

16. The economy of the vehicle fleet and the percentage of sustainable transport fuels will be increased mainly through targeted tax policies and the public sector acting as a role model. The investment and tax policies of the public sector will be used to influence the purchase of economical vehicles and sustainable alternative fuels. More economic vehicles and sustainable alternative fuels are preferred in public procurements. Consumer awareness will be increased by the example of the public sector.

17. Means of transportation and mobility with low greenhouse gas emissions will be preferred through prioritising the development of public transportation, non-motorised traffic and energy-efficient carriage of goods. The state and the local governments will advance transportation management which sees the system as a whole regardless of administrative divisions or the form of ownership of public transportation companies. For fulfilling this purpose, the development of a tax policy guided from the overall effect of transportation and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions will be considered without an increase in the overall tax burden.

18. The fields of research, development and innovation that facilitate an increase in the awareness and competence of the central government and local government institutions and companies in the development of sustainable transportation and mobility and executing relevant pilot projects will be facilitated.

AGRICULTURE

19. The soil's carbon stock will be increased and maintained, and land areas of significant carbon stock will be developed and maintained. Farmers are motivated to increase the soil's

carbon stock, shape and maintain permanent grasslands, small wetlands and buffer zones, and reduce the cultivation of peat soil.

20. Efficient and ecological use of agricultural land will be encouraged while the falling out of agricultural use of such land will be avoided. The production potential of agricultural land and the area of cropland with valuable soil will be maintained. Eco-friendly and climate-friendly cultivation styles and practices and efficient agricultural technologies and practices will be implemented for ensuring and increasing the fertility and biodiversity of agricultural land. The falling out of use of agricultural land with valuable soil or the reduction of its area, such as the covering of such land with buildings or facilities, will be limited with legal acts.

21. The use of plant nutrients and the replacement of mineral fertilisers with organic fertilisers and eco-friendly soil conditioners will be enhanced. The unnecessary removal of organic substance from the soil will be avoided. The best solutions for enhancing the use of plant nutrients and replacing mineral fertilisers with more eco-friendly organic fertilisers will be identified and implemented.

22. The production of bioenergy will be steadily enhanced and such energy will be mainly used instead of non-renewable fuels with more energy intensive manufacturing processes. Greater efficiency and the upcycling of resources will be facilitated in the production of bioenergy. Low-quality timber and side products of the timber industry will be used for manufacturing timber-based fuels. The combined use of manure from intensive animal farming and grassland resources that have not been exploited so far will be preferred for the production of biogas.

23. The productivity of the agricultural sector and the efficiency of resource use will be increased to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases per production unit. Herewith, the focus will be on eco-friendlier manure management for limiting ammonia emissions.

24. To limit greenhouse gas emissions in the agricultural sector, fields of research, development and innovation that increase the sustainability of agriculture will be preferred. To enhance innovation, research will be tightly linked to agricultural production through education, information dissemination and counselling. The capacity of research, development and innovation activities related to environment and climate change in agriculture will be increased through research projects.

FORESTRY AND LAND USE

25. Forest growth and the carbon sequestration ability will be increased through productive and sustainable forest management, and the carbon stock of forests will be maintained in the longer perspective. The productivity of managed forest land will be mainly increased through improvement cutting, timely cutting of forest stands and fast renewal of forests with tree species appropriate for the habitat type. Flexible rotation ages considering the growth potential of forest stands will be implemented in managed forests, and the principles of sustainable forestry and the maintenance of biodiversity will be taken into account.

26. Timber use will be consistently enhanced and the carbon stock in timber products and buildings will be increased, thus replacing the use of non-renewable natural resources. The use and production of domestic timber will be developed, e.g., the use of timber in construction will be increased.

27. Preservation of the current area under forest land will be facilitated, and in other categories of land use, techniques of increasing carbon sequestration and reducing emissions will be preferred. Trends in the land use sector will be monitored and considered in planning.

28. The carbon stock in the peat layer of mires will be preserved or increased. Further drainage of mires will be avoided and near-natural water regimes will be restored in drained peat lands, if possible, or the further degradation of such areas will be avoided.

29. Research, development and innovation fields that help to increase carbon sequestration and find alternative uses for timber will be preferred in the forestry and land use sector.

IV. Sectoral political guidelines for adapting to the effects of climate change

30. The operation of the economy and the infrastructure of the energy sector and other sectors in the occurrence of any climate event will be ensured in a way that ensures the availability of vital services to people. The awareness of policymakers, the public sector and other economic agents and their ability to consider the impact of climate change in their activity will be increased.

31. Adverse health effects, morbidity and mortality due to unfavourable extreme weather conditions will be reduced or alleviated. Population groups damaged by the effects of climate change will be helped and the preparedness of the population for emergency situations and rescue capacity will be increased.

32. The resilience of settlements, mainly cities, to climate change will be increased by managing storm and flood risks through considering the location during land use and the planning of land use and through alleviating the so-called urban heat island effect. The consideration of long-term effects of climate change in land use and planning will be improved. Local governments are cooperated with to ensure the sustainable development of settlements, from the human as well as the eco-friendliness, socioeconomic, cultural and energetic perspective.

33. Preparedness to consider the effects of climate change to the natural environment will be improved. The optimal adaptation of natural species, habitats and ecosystems to the effects of climate change will be purposefully supported.

34. The sustainable operation of bio-economy sectors and consideration of the changing climate conditions will be ensured mainly through climate-aware planning.

35. The raising of the competence and awareness of the central government and local governments in adapting to the effects of climate change as well as relevant research, development and innovation activities, implementation of pilot projects and training will be supported. The inclusion of Estonian scientists in international climate research for ensuring the immediate availability of relevant research results in Estonia and relevant consideration of justified results and recommendations will be increased.

V. Reporting

36. As of 2019, the Government of the Republic will present the Riigikogu with a report on considering the main principles of the climate policy in the preparation and implementation of cross-sectoral and sectoral strategies at least once in every four years. Furthermore, the climate policy until 2050 will be reviewed and if necessary, updated in every four years.

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