

EU WORKS TO ADOPT ROBUST 2030 CLIMATE TARGET

EU urges member states to move toward low-carbon economy; Businesses at odds about carbon allowances

The European Union [made progress](#) towards a deal that will help its member states transition to a low-carbon economy by 2030. A summit planned for October 23-24, 2014 will bring together energy and environment ministers from 28 member states to discuss a deal on policies that will support a low-carbon economy and increase energy security. Ed Davey, the U.K. secretary of state for energy and climate change said in a statement: "There's a real sense that a deal can be done and a real determination to

try to get a deal done. There's still quite a deal of diplomacy to be done, but we're narrowing down on the differences."

Meanwhile, business groups in the region are divided about reforming the Emissions Trading System (ETS) at a time when the carbon trading market in Europe is [coming under scrutiny](#). Eliciting mixed reactions, the European Commission has recommended putting aside hundreds of millions of surplus carbon allowances, in part to stabilize market shocks and to drive carbon prices up, making them competitive with lower carbon technologies.

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'NATURAL' FOODS OFTEN CONTAIN GMOs

This may come as a surprise to some: Packaged foods labeled 'natural' actually contain high levels of genetically modified ingredients. Consumer Reports tested over 80 different products and found that foods labeled as "non-GMO," or "organic" were found to be free of genetically modified corn and soy, but virtually all of the foods labeled as "natural" contained substantial amounts of GMO ingredients. Urvashi Rangan, the executive director of Consumer Reports Food Safety and Sustainability said in a statement: "Consumers are being misled by the 'natural' label".

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BAD WEEK FOR: COAL

Coal mining causing high concentrations of methane in US; Some pensions and universities continue to ditch coal assets

A new study published this week by the journal Geophysical Research Letters found that a small patch—or "hot spot"—of [methane in the US](#) near the intersection of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Utah is the highest concentration of the gas in the US and accounts for 10 percent of

all methane in the country. It appears that coal is the culprit. The methane gas is found to be coming from leaks in coal processing equipment, not fracking, as previously thought.

Meanwhile, the Australian pension fund LGS will [drop coal assets](#). It has decided to sell its positions in coal companies, saying "climate change is an unarguable scientific reality and a very real investment risk". In addition, [Glasgow University announced](#) this week its plans to drop £18M worth of fossil fuel investments.

COST OF RENEWABLES MAY REACH COAL LEVELS BY 2020

Wind, solar cost may be competitive sooner than expected

Energy consultant [Poyry Oyj](#) reported this week that the cost of onshore wind power and solar may fall to the same levels as coal power generation by 2020. “Solar plants in Spain may produce electricity competitive with coal and gas as early as 2021, in Portugal by 2022 and in parts of Italy by 2025”, Poyry said. In order for renewables to be competitive with coal it will

require increased efficiency in the storage of energy and lower capital costs associated with building clean-power plants. “The revenues of any investment now undertaken with, say, a 30-year economic life will be affected by the build of unsubsidized renewables as typical subsidy regimes are 10 years to 20 years in duration,” says a senior consultant at Poyry.

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STAT OF THE WEEK

Twenty Six: the number of cities—among them San Francisco, Stockholm, Rio de Janeiro, Pune—which have signed on to the Oil & Gas Methane Partnership to reduce methane and other potent GHG emissions (while less ‘long-lived’ than carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, methane is approximately 25 times more potent in trapping heat). Signers are committed to reduce methane and carbon air pollutants by 2020, focusing on the solid waste sector.

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LESSONS LEARNED FROM A CARBON CAPTURE PROJECT

High capital costs and low efficiencies aren’t deterring owners

The Boundary Dam Unit #3, the first utility-scale power plant equipped with carbon capture and storage (CCS), became operational this month. Opening the plant offered the owners, SaskPower, the opportunity to reflect on lessons learned. SaskPower insists that next

time the CCS system can be completed much more cheaply. The new unit is also less efficient than its predecessor. “It will supply over 110 megawatts of electricity to the grid compared with 139 MW previously, a reduction of around 20 percent,” according to SaskPower.

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BELIEVE IT OR NOT

New startup hopes to replicate taste of meat using plant matter, or “plant blood” as they put it.

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