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Answer given by Mr Hoekstra
on behalf of the European Commission
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According to the Commission's analysis[1], carbon removals are necessary for the EU to achieve its climate targets including negative emissions after reaching climate neutrality at the latest by 2050. The Commission is currently assessing different policy options and support mechanisms that would efficiently support the deployment of carbon removals, ensuring their environmental integrity and without undermining our emission reduction efforts. The integration of permanent carbon removals in the Emissions Trading System (ETS) is one of those options.

By July 2026 the Commission will assess if and how the negative emissions resulting from greenhouse gases that are removed from the atmosphere and safely and permanently stored could be accounted for and covered by the ETS. Maintaining environmental integrity of emissions reductions under the ETS is an indispensable requirement for any integration.

Directive 2003/87/EC[2] requires strict criteria and safeguards to ensure that the integration of removals would not lead to a delay in necessary emission reductions in accordance with Union climate targets. The Commission is analysing possible safeguards, such as limiting the total volume of permanent carbon removals that could be used in the ETS (e.g. supply-side limits on the type or amount of permanent removals that can be used). While our framework must signal that removals are not an alternative to emissions reductions, it should also give early signals for the removals market to develop in time the amounts of removal required to reach our climate targets.

[1] Impact assessment on Europe's 2040 climate target: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2024%3A63%3AFIN.
[2] Directive 2003/87/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 October 2003 establishing a scheme for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading within the Community and amending Council Directive 96/61/EC, OJ L 275, 25.10.2003.