

EN

E-000246/2026

Answer given by Mr Hoekstra

On behalf of the European Commission

(20.3.2026)

Social and distributional aspects are addressed in EU climate policies¹. The polluter-pays principle underpinning the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) ensures fairness in the transition. Member States can use ETS auction revenues to support those most affected. The EU funded Just Transition Mechanism addresses the social and economic effects of the transition, focusing on the regions, industries and workers in the territories where economic diversification and reconversion is most needed.

The EU ETS has been covering the aviation sector in Europe since 2012. Private jets are included in the ETS above certain thresholds. The EU ETS has been extended to maritime transport since 2024, including yachts above 5 000 gross tonnage, in respect of their emissions from voyages for commercial purposes. In accordance with the ETS Directive requirements, the Commission will evaluate the climate impact of exempted small maritime and aviation operators. It may propose additional measures as appropriate. Some Member States have voluntary ‘opted-in’ emissions from leisure boats within the ‘ETS2’.

The new ETS for buildings and road transport (ETS2) places emphasis on fairness. It will generate revenues that must be reinvested in climate action. The Social Climate Fund addresses the social impacts of the ETS2 on vulnerable groups, by devoting more than EUR 86 billion to support those affected by energy and transport poverty.

The revision of the Energy Taxation Directive aims to broaden the scope of energy taxation to cover more sectors including aviation and maritime through removing existing exemptions. The proposal remains under consideration by the Council. The Commission stands ready to continue supporting the adoption.

¹ See, for example, Annex 8 of the impact assessment for the 2040 Climate Target - SWD(2024) 63 final, part 3/5, and more specifically Section 2.4.1 ‘Fuel expenses, energy and transport poverty, distributional impacts’, Section 2.4.4 ‘Changes in relative prices and distributional impacts’ and Section 2.4.5 ‘The equity dimension’.