

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001253/26
to the Commission
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(25 March 2026)**

Subject: Green transition or just a rip-off? Millions of euros from citizens' pockets will flow into Brussels funds, but will this result in cleaner air?

The Emissions Trading System (EU ETS), and in particular the new ETS2 for buildings, road transport, and small installations (postponed until 2028), are leading to a significant increase in the cost of fuel, heating and energy for ordinary citizens and households. Despite claims of a 'green transition', many citizens see these fees primarily as a tool to increase the cost of living, which hits the lower and middle classes the hardest. Revenues from ETS2 auctions are intended to partially finance the Social Climate Fund to the tune of some EUR 65--86 billion by 2032, but the question remains as to whether these payments will actually result in cleaner air or merely shift the burden onto families.

1. Can the Commission demonstrate that ETS and ETS2 levies will actually ensure significantly cleaner air and reduced emissions in the buildings and transport sectors, or is this primarily an additional tax on consumers without measurable environmental benefits for ordinary people?
2. For which specific projects and in what proportions does the Commission plan to use the funds collected from ETS/ETS2, and how much will go directly to supporting low-income households, how much to green investments, and how much will remain in the EU's central budget?
3. Will the Commission assume full political and moral responsibility for further increases in energy and fuel prices, for the deterioration of European families' standard of living, and for the potential rise in energy and transport poverty resulting from the introduction of ETS2?

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**Answer given by Mr Hoekstra on behalf of the European Commission
(12 May 2026)**

The Emissions Trading System (ETS) has reduced greenhouse gas emissions from power and industry by 50% compared to 2005 ⁽¹⁾, contributing to substantial health benefits from improved air quality ⁽²⁾.

The revision scheduled for July 2026 will determine the cost-effective emission reductions for 2031-2040, in line with the economy-wide 2040 emission reduction target.

ETS2 is scheduled to become fully operational in 2028. Its trajectory is set to bring emissions down by 42% by 2030 compared to 2005, complementing other EU and national policies to decarbonise buildings and road transport. The environmental and economic impacts were assessed in the impact assessment ⁽³⁾.

More than three quarter of ETS auction revenue goes to national budgets and must be used for clean energy, decarbonisation and just transition activities.

The Commission closely monitors this spending to ensure revenues are effectively and swiftly allocated. The remaining revenue is invested through EU-level instruments in industrial innovation, energy modernisation, energy security and — in particular from future ETS2 revenue — through the Social Climate Fund. An overview can be consulted on the Commission website ⁽⁴⁾.

The Social Climate Fund, mobilising at least EUR 86.7 billion, is available to Member States to reduce energy and transport poverty through investments to reduce households' vulnerability to increasingly volatile imported fossil energy prices and providing direct income support to mitigate short-term impacts of ETS2. Member States must also use national ETS2 revenues to fund climate action and support households through the transition.

Strong safeguards are in place to ensure a smooth start to ETS2 with stable prices and support vulnerable households.

⁽¹⁾ 2025 Carbon Market Report: https://climate.ec.europa.eu/news-other-reads/news/2025-carbon-market-report-eu-ets-lowers-power-sector-emissions-and-expands-maritime-transport-2025-12-03_en.

⁽²⁾ <https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2319908121>.

⁽³⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021SC0601>.

⁽⁴⁾ https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/carbon-markets/eu-emissions-trading-system-eu-ets/how-do-member-states-use-ets-revenues_en.