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## EU LEADERS AGREE TO 2050 CARBON NEUTRALITY DEAL WITHOUT POLAND

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Deutsche Welle (13 December 2019)

EU leaders have backed plans to slash the bloc's carbon emissions to net-zero by 2050 – with the exception of coal-reliant Poland. The target is part of a plan to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent.

After marathon talks in Brussels, the leaders of European Union member states – bar Poland – agreed early Friday to commit to going carbon neutral by 2050.

"We have reached an agreement on climate change, it is very important, it was crucial, for Europe to show strong ambition," EU Council President Charles Michel said.

The summit was the first since European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen unveiled her "European Green Deal" – a plan to overhaul the EU economy and achieve climate neutrality by the middle of the century.

The 2050 goal is a key commitment under the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change. In order to meet it, EU countries will have to slash carbon emissions generated by fossil fuels and find ways to offset remaining emissions.

The summer of 2019 saw heat records in Europe broken across the continent. In July, Germany recorded its highest temperature ever at 42.6 C (108 F). France broke its heat record twice in 2019, the highest temperature measuring 46.C (114.8 F) in July. Climate change increases the frequency of heat waves.

### Poland left out

Poland, which gets 80% of its power from coal, resisted the plan during hours of intense debate and was ultimately left out of the commitment.

Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki announced he had secured an exemption from 2050 climate neutrality, but said the bloc had offered generous funding for regions that would be "most affected" by the fossil fuel phaseout.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel told reporters that Warsaw would now have until a summit in June 2020 to decide whether it can commit to implementing the goal.

"There is no division of Europe into different parts, but there is a member state that still needs a

bit more time," she added.

The French president's office said EU leaders would work towards getting Poland on board, and that the new "European Green Deal" would be rolled out in the meantime.

### **A Green Deal for Europe: The challenges facing the EU**

The Czech Republic had also raised objections to the 2050 carbon neutrality goal, and only agreed to the deal after assurances were made for member states to use nuclear energy to reduce emissions.

Scientists warn that a dramatic shift away from fossil fuels is needed to prevent global temperatures from rising more than 1.5 to 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

According to a 2018 EU report, the bloc's emissions have fallen significantly over the past two decades but still represent 9.6% of carbon-emitted globally each year.

nm/sms (AFP, dpa, Reuters)

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