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Report Highlights:

This report includes details on the status of the objectives and strategies under the European Green Deal, including those in the Farm to Fork (F2F) Strategy, the Biodiversity Strategy, and the Climate Target Plan. It covers March - September 2020.

Background Information:

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has prioritized her presidency around greening and transforming the EU economy to become carbon neutral by 2050 through the politically ambitious “[EU Green Deal](#).” This update report includes details on what was proposed and what has progressed during the period March - September 2020.

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PART I: REGULATORY UPDATES

On March 4, 2020, the European Commission published the founding legislative proposal of the EU Green Deal: [the EU Climate Law](#). This proposal aims to write into EU law the goal set out in the European Green Deal: climate neutrality by 2050 while achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions. The Climate Law will make the objectives of the EU Green Deal legally binding for the European Union and the Member States. The proposal is currently going through the EU legislative process in the European Parliament (EP) and the Council of Ministers.

Additionally, throughout 2020, the European Commission is publishing many sectoral communications and strategies that lay out a vision (with proposed measures) to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 (which will be enshrined into EU law by the EU Climate Law). More information on the status of the EU Green deal strategies can be found [here](#).

This report will look at the sectorial strategies that may impact agriculture and food:

- The Farm to Fork Strategy
- The Biodiversity Strategy
- The EU Climate Target Plan for 2030

The Farm to Fork Strategy

The Commission published the Farm to Fork (F2F) Strategy on May 20, 2020. The Strategy lists 27 actions aimed to transform the way EU food is produced, processed, transported, presented, and sold. The full Strategy can be found [here](#). The Commission identified these actions to further the Green Deal goals, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and pursuing economic growth decoupled from resource use. This report will only assess actions that impact U.S. agricultural product market access, EU competitiveness, and/or create technical barriers to trade.

1. Proposal for a harmonized mandatory front-of-pack nutrition label to enable consumers to make health conscious food choices

The Commission announced that it would propose EU-harmonized mandatory front-of-pack nutrition labeling before the end of 2022. In a [specific report](#) on the subject, the Commission states that that front-of-pack labeling has the potential to help consumers make health-conscious food choices and that

harmonized mandatory front-of-pack nutrition labeling at the EU-level could help inform consumer decisions. Health and Food Safety Commissioner Kyriakides underlined that at this stage the Commission would not be recommending any specific schemes and would rather first launch an impact assessment on the different options while soliciting input from stakeholders through a public consultation.

What's new?

European media suggest that the French NutriScore labeling scheme is the frontrunner labeling approach to be widely adopted across the EU. France, Belgium¹, Spain, The Netherlands² and Germany have already adopted the Nutri-Score system domestically. The NutriScore scheme has also been adopted by leading food manufacturers such as Nestlé and Danone. However, some Member States, such as Italy, are outspoken critics of the French scheme. The Italian government is concerned that the French approach to labeling will discriminate against traditional Mediterranean food, such as olive oil, ham and cheeses. Italy, Cyprus, Czechia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia and Romania are in favor of the “battery” system created by the Italian government. While no proposal has been published by the Commission, front of pack nutrition labeling already was raised and [discussed](#) at the Agriculture Council of Ministers in September 2020. It will remain a contentious issue between the Member States once a labeling proposal is published.

2. Proposal for a sustainable food labelling framework to empower consumers to make sustainable food choices

The Commission announced that it will “examine ways to harmonize voluntary green claims³” and it will propose a sustainable food labeling framework that covers the nutritional, climate, environmental, and social aspects of food products. This proposal is expected to be published in 2024.

What's new?

On August 27, 2020, the Commission launched [a public consultation](#) on ‘Green Claims.’ The Commission aims to publish a legislative proposal by mid-2021. The goal of this proposal would require companies to substantiate claims they make about the environmental footprint of their products/services by using standard methods for quantifying them. The aim is to make the claims “reliable, comparable and verifiable across the EU – reducing ‘greenwashing’ (companies giving a false impression of their environmental impact).”

The Biodiversity Strategy

1. Action Plan for Organic Farming for 2021-2026

¹ See, e.g., [BE2018-2011: Belgium Adopts Nutri-Score for Front of Pack Nutritional Labeling](#)

² See, e.g., [NL2019-2283: Dutch Food Company Adds Nutri-score to Packaged Products](#)

³ Green or environmental claims falling in the scope of the initiative are claims made in relation with the environmental impacts covered by the environmental footprint methods. More information can be found on the environmental footprint methods can be found on the European Commission’s website: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/ef_transition.htm

In the Biodiversity Strategy, the Commission set a goal of 25 percent of agricultural land area for organic farming in the EU by 2030, up from 8 percent currently. To that end, the Commission intends to adopt an Action Plan for Organic Farming for 2021-2026 by the end of 2020.

What's new?

On September 4, 2020, the European Commission launched a public consultation on the EU's future action plan for the development of EU organic production. For more information, please see GAIN Report [EU Launches Consultation on Future Organics Action Plan](#).

2. Study on the sustainability of the use of forest biomass for energy production / Operational guidance on the new sustainability criteria on forest biomass for energy

The Commission has announced that it will publish a study on the sustainability of the use of forest biomass for energy production in November 2021. At the same time, as part of the EU's Renewable Energy Directive 2021-2030 (known as REDII), the European Commission is preparing the operational guidance on the new sustainability criteria on forest biomass for energy (wood pellets). For more information on REDII, please see [E42020-0032: Biofuels Annual](#) and the 'Climate Target Plan 2030' section below.

What's new?

In July 2020, the European Commission launched [a technical consultation](#) on its operational guidance on the new sustainability criteria on forest biomass for energy. The draft legislation is expected to be published in October 2020.

3. Measures to avoid or minimize the placing of products associated with deforestation or forest degradation on the EU market

In the European Green Deal, the Commission indicated that it would "take measures, both regulatory and otherwise, to promote imported products and value chains that do not involve deforestation and forest degradation." With the Biodiversity Strategy, the Commission announced that it will propose "measures to avoid or minimize the placing of products associated with deforestation or forest degradation on the EU market" in 2021.

What's new?

On September 3, 2020, the European Commission launched [a public consultation](#) on the EU's future possible actions to reduce the impact of products placed on the EU market with regards to deforestation and forest degradation. For more information, please see GAIN Report [EU Launches Public Consultation on Deforestation-Free Supply Chains](#).

On September 16, 2020, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on "the EU's role in protecting and restoring the world's forests." The aim of this EP resolution is to influence the future Commission's proposal on 'deforestation-free supply chains.' To curb deforestation and forest degradation around the

world, the EP calls for a sustainability criteria for plant protein imports and denounces the increasing use of wood for biofuels and bioenergy generation.

The EU Climate Target Plan for 2030

On September 17, 2020, the European Commission presented its [2030 Climate Target Plan](#). The objective is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to at least 55 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. The Plan includes proposed actions to achieve this objective, including a revision of the Renewable Energy Directive and the launch of an EU Carbon Farming Initiative. For more information, please see GAIN Report [EU Commission Unveils EU Climate Target Plan 2030](#).

1. EU carbon farming initiative

On September 17, 2020, The Commission announced that it will begin work shortly on the carbon farming initiative as part of its Climate Target Plan 2030. A proposal is expected by the end of 2021, which would be followed by stakeholder consultations. The Commission wants to integrate agricultural non-CO2 greenhouse gas emissions (mostly methane) into the land use, land use change, and forestry (LULUCF) sector and to create a new regulated sector covering agriculture, forestry, and land use. In practice, this could mean payments for farmers who actively sequester carbon on their farms.

2. Revision of the Renewable Energy Directive

The Renewable Energy Directive for 2021-2030 (REDII) was adopted in 2018 and will enter into force on January 1, 2021. REDII introduces sustainability criteria for forestry biomass (wood pellets). For more information, please see GAIN Report '[EU Reaches a Political Agreement on Renewable Energy](#)'.

What's new?

On August 4, 2020, the European Commission launched a public consultation on the potential revision of the 2018 Renewable Energy Directive (REDII). The Commission announced that an impact assessment will be conducted to evaluate if amendments to the REDII are needed improve alignment with the EU Green Deal. The Commission is exploring several scenarios, summarized below, and detailed in its inception impact assessment. The scenarios are:

- Option 1 – No policy change. REDII remains as is, without any modification, through 2030.
- Option 2 – Take non-regulatory measures. These could encompass training, information campaigns, and project financing, etc.
- Option 3 - Raising the REDII emissions targets and sub-targets in line with the EU's new Green Deal 2030 Climate Target Plan.
- Option 4 – Amend REDII to translate the relevant Green Deal energy and climate initiatives into REDII regulatory measures. For example, the Commission could propose revised sustainability and greenhouse gas emissions criteria for bioenergy sources.
- Option 5 – Combinations of Options 2, 3 and 4.

For more information, please see GAIN Report '[European Commission Launches Public Consultation on Possible Revision of REDII](#)'.

In its Climate Target Plan, the Commission reaffirmed its desire to propose revisions to the REDII sustainability criteria for forestry biomass to ensure that the EU uses “sustainably produced biomass and minimize the use of whole trees and food and feed-based crops to produce energy.”

PART II: FORTHCOMING EVENTS

October 2, 2020: EU Multi-Stakeholder Platform on Protecting the World’s Forests

October 15-16, 2020: [Farm to Fork 2020 conference - Building sustainable food systems together](#)

October 19, 2020: Agriculture and Fisheries Council (AGRIFISH) meeting

October 19-23, 2020: European Parliament Plenary (discussion on CAP and other agricultural issues)

[\(Full Agenda\)](#)

October 20-22, 2020: [EU Green Week](#)

October 26-27: Parliament AGRI Committee meeting

October 27, 2020: Transatlantic Sustainability Summit

October 28, 2020: EU-Australia Farming: One Goal, Many Paths to Sustainability

October 28, 2020: Parliament ENVI Committee meeting

October 29, 2020: Parliament ENVI Committee meeting*

November 10, 2020: Parliament AGRI Committee meeting

November 10, 2020: Parliament ENVI Committee meeting*

November 16, 2020: AGRIFISH Council meeting

November 16, 2020: Parliament ENVI Committee meeting*

November 30, 2020: Parliament ENVI Committee meeting*

December 1, 2020: Parliament ENVI Committee meeting*

December 10, 2020: Parliament ENVI Committee meeting*

December 15, 2020: AGRIFISH Council meeting

* meetings are not yet confirmed

Attachments:

No Attachments.