

AIRY PROMISES: HOW EU GOVERNMENTS ARE FAILING TO CUT AIR POLLUTION AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

Air pollution harms our health and causes 400,000 premature deaths per year in the EU. It also damages nature and ecosystems.

EU laws establish minimum standards for the quality of the air we breathe, national objectives to reduce overall emissions, and rules to cut emissions at source. It is up to member states to implement them, but most of them are failing to comply with the law and protect people and nature from harmful air pollution.

National Emission Ceilings: what EU laws say

The National Emission Ceilings Directive (**NECD**) sets National Emission Reduction Commitments (**NERCs**) for five air pollutants: nitrogen oxides (**NO_x**), non-methane volatile organic compounds (**NMVOCs**), sulphur dioxide (**SO₂**), ammonia (**NH₃**) and fine particulate matter (**PM_{2.5}**). The targets are expressed in percentage reductions from 2005 levels up to 2020 and 2030. Once achieved, they will halve the health impacts of air pollution by 2030 compared to 2005 levels.

The **NECD** requires member states to prepare National Air Pollution Control Programmes (**NAPCPs**) including the measures – new or already in place – to deliver on these reductions.

A lawful National Air Pollution Control Programme must also include:



Consideration of detailed policy options to attain the 2020 and 2030 NERCs, indicating also the 2025 trajectory (linear or not linear, in the latest case providing the necessary justification), and to contribute to further improve the air quality.



Indication of the measures selected for adoption, a timetable for their adoption, implementation and review of the measures, the authorities responsible for the implementation of the programme.



How the NAPCPs link with other relevant objectives, such as those of the Ambient Air Quality Directives and the National Energy and Climate Plans.



A public consultation undertaken at the time when all options are open.

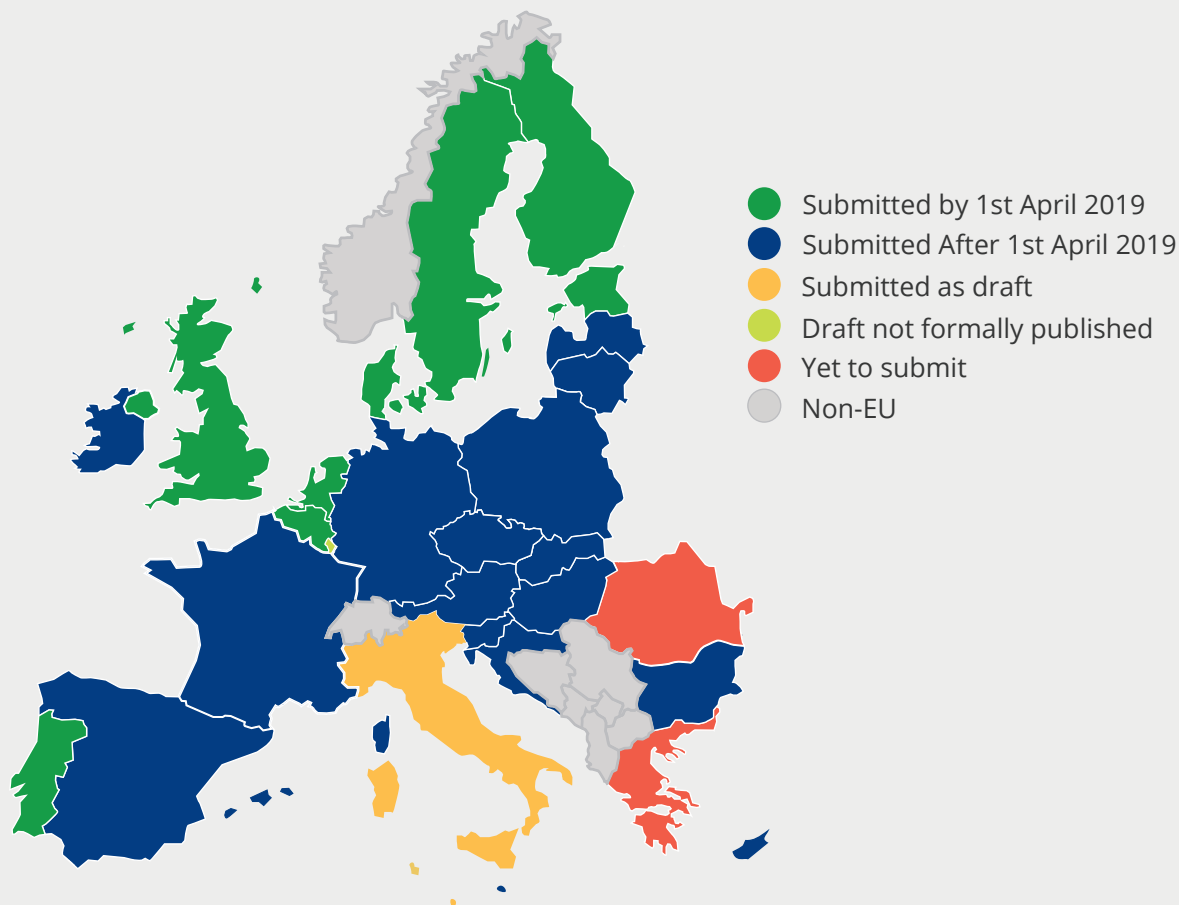
The lack of effective public consultation procedures during the preparation of the first **NAPCPs** is a matter of great concern as not all member states conducted one and, where this happened, it was often not organised at a time where all options were still open.

NATIONAL PLANS: TOO LITTLE, TOO SLOW

The first **NAPCP** had to be finalised, and submitted using a provided common format, by **1st April 2019**. But how did governments fare?

Only 8 member states respected that deadline, despite the first set of targets being due to be achieved by the end of 2020.

Timeliness of NAPCP submission



Member State PaMs submission timeline via the EEA's reporting portal

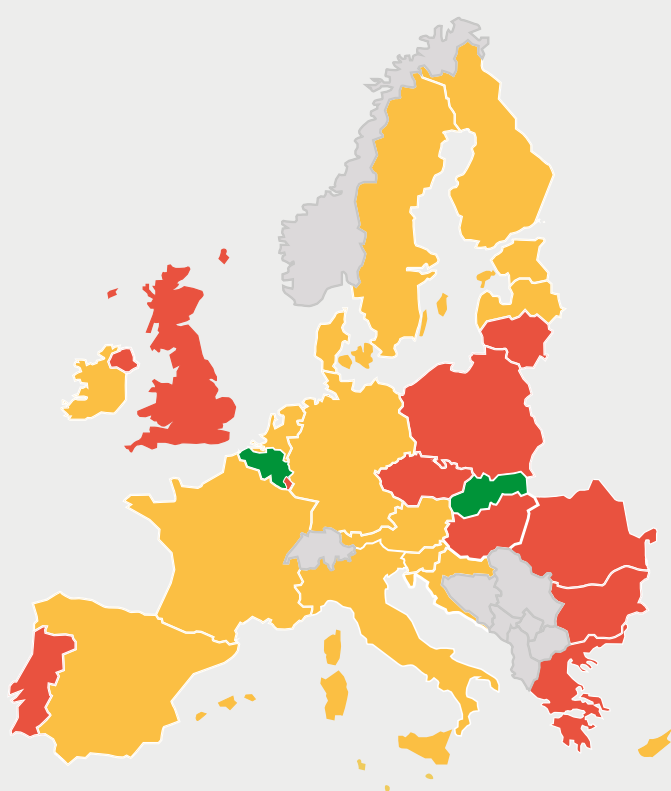


The map and timeline reflect the situation at the time the EEB report was published, December 2020. For an updated timeline of the final versions of the Programmes, see <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/air/reduction/NAPCP.htm>.

UNFIT TO MEET EU TARGETS

The EEB report 'National Air Pollution Control Programmes: analysis and suggestions for the way forward' and the European Commission's progress implementation report concluded that most National Air Pollution Control Programmes presented by member states fail to show how the agreed Emission Reduction Targets will be met. Among the delivered Programmes, only two are considered likely to achieve the 2020-2029 commitments and only one of the 2030 commitments.

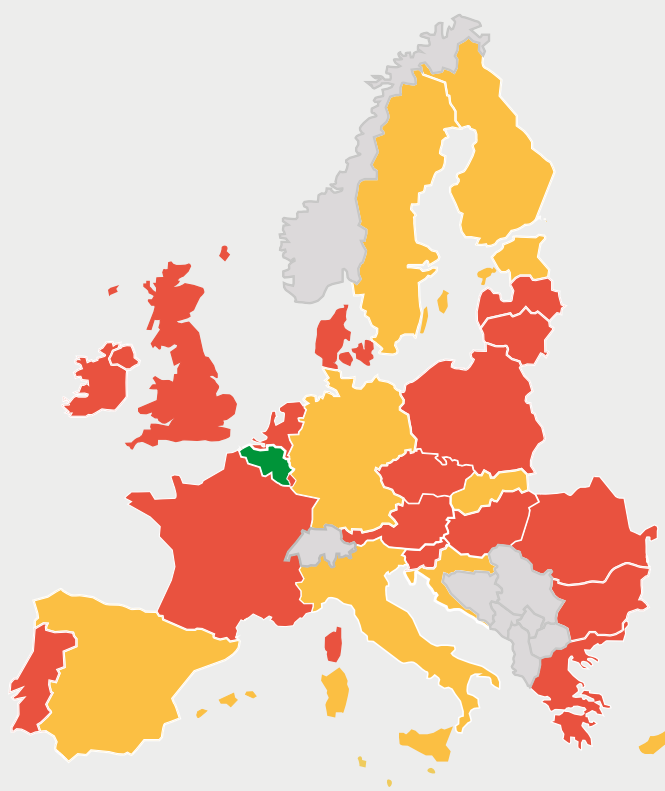
Overall risk of non-compliance 2020-2029



● High ● Low
● Medium ● Non-EU

The maps are based on WAM (With Additional Measures) scenario.

Overall risk of non-compliance from 2030 onwards



● High ● Low
● Medium ● Non-EU



The projected non-compliance with ammonia reduction targets is particularly concerning.

The Commission's first implementation report adopted in June 2020 highlights that *"member states have to continue to explore additional and more stringent measures to ensure further and fully effective reductions of their national air pollutant emissions in an efficient manner. Ammonia stands out in this respect."*

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEMBER STATES:



Ensure the mandatory common format is used, following the indicated structure, and report as much of the optional content as possible wherever relevant.



Engage with key actors, including neighbouring member states and NGOs, at each stage of the process, by organising meaningful public consultations and taking into account the feedback received.



Provide full details of the measures to be adopted, including implementation route, timescales, benefits over time, costs and co-benefits.



Select the measures through a method that uses clear and transparent parameters, focussing on priority pollutants and sectors. Consider key uncertainties and the risks of non-compliance if the measures are implemented, as well as if certain measures are not to be implemented.



Improve emission inventories and projections through more detailed methodologies. Follow the European Commission's recommendations, prepared for each country, on how to improve the NAPCP.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION:



Engage with the member states to understand their experiences in preparing their first NAPCP, what improvements could be made, and what specific support could be provided.



Enforce quick resubmission of NAPCPs for all the countries identified as high risk in the Commission's assessment



Improve the common format (especially in the reporting on measures) well ahead of the next reporting deadline, based on national feedback as well as on the findings of the European Commission's evaluation and the EEB's report.



Ahead of the 2025 Directive review, enhance action on those pollutants where the countries are facing the greatest challenges in terms of compliance, and propose additional EU-wide actions to improve the situation, especially for agricultural ammonia emissions: for some pollutants and sectors, national action alone are unlikely to have the desired impacts.



Enforce the requirement to use the common reporting format and measures reporting tool.

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The EEB report 'National Air Pollution Control Programmes: analysis and suggestions for the way forward' is available at: eeb.org/library/national-air-pollution-control-programmes-analysis-and-suggestions-for-the-way-forward/

More information can be found here: <https://linkmix.co/4379745>

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clean air farming
Reducing Ammonia and Methane
Emissions from Agriculture



It has been commissioned by the **European Environmental Bureau (EEB)**, Europe's largest network of environmental citizens' organisations, and does not commit the donors.