

Monthly Report on Research and Policy Developments - Energy and Climate Change

June 2017

Purpose: This document provides a summary of recent key developments in policy and research relating to energy and climate change. It has been prepared by the [ClimateXChange](#) Secretariat and is intended to keep Scottish policymakers informed of issues relevant to the Scottish Government's Energy and Climate Change policy portfolio.

International Climate and Energy Research and Policy

Climate change laws of the world webinar

'Climate Change Laws of the World', a comprehensive climate change legislation and litigation online knowledge resource, was launched with a [webinar](#) on the 5 June 2017. The resource covers over 1,200 climate change laws and policies in 164 countries, and over 250 climate litigation cases from 25 countries.

BP statistical review of world energy

The [BP Statistical Review of World Energy](#) published on 13 June 2017 shows global markets continuing to undergo long-term changes as they also adapt to nearer-term price challenges. Data contained within the report demonstrate the transitions now underway, with a shift to slower growth in global energy demand, demand moving slowly towards the fast-growing developing economies of Asia, and a marked shift towards lower carbon fuels, as renewable energy continues to grow strongly and coal use falls.

France to ban new oil and gas exploration

The new French Minister for 'ecological transitions', Nicolas Hulot, has [announced](#) that France is to stop granting licenses for oil and gas exploration. The move is part of a transition towards environmentally-friendly energy driven by President Macron's government and is expected to be passed into law this autumn. The announcement has been [welcomed](#) as a good first step but some in the French environmental community are disappointed and feel that Hulot could have gone further, referring to exploration licenses that are already approved and likely to be extended, and those that are still awaiting approval.

All Volvo cars to be electric or hybrid from 2019

Car manufacturer Volvo has [announced](#) that from 2019, all cars it launches will be partially or completely battery-powered. The company has said this will be a 'historic end' to building models that only have internal combustion engines. Prof David Bailey, Aston University, has [said](#) the announcement is 'a sign that the industry is really starting to move' and that electric vehicles 'will become mainstream'.

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France to ban sales of petrol and diesel cars by 2040

A day after Volvo's electrification announcement, French ecology minister Nicola Hulot [announced](#) 'an end to the sale of petrol and diesel cars by 2040', calling the move a 'veritable revolution'. WWF France have welcomed the announcement and said the country's new [Plan Climat](#) policy goes further than previous administrations in France.

Launch of world's first climate rating system for investment funds

[Climetrics](#) is the world's first fund rating which enables investors to integrate climate impact into their investment decisions. Covering equity funds and ETFs in Europe worth €2.5 trillion, it was developed by two recognized climate specialists: not-for-profit CDP (formerly Carbon Disclosure Project) and ISS-Ethix Climate Solutions. Climetrics provides investors with a 1-5 rating – symbolized by green leaves "issued" on a scale of one to five – based on a comprehensive, three-level methodology using data mainly from CDP and ISS-EthixClimate Solutions. Climetrics was catalyzed and funded by Climate-KIC, the EU's main climate innovation initiative.

Ireland bans fracking

[Legislation has been passed](#) in Ireland to ban hydraulic fracturing; joining France, Germany and Bulgaria where the onshore practice has also been banned.

Swiss firm has built the world's first direct air capture plant

Swiss firm Climateworks has built the world's first commercial plant to capture CO₂ directly from the air. Climateworks has confirmed that its Direct Air Capture (DAC) process cost \$600 per tonne of CO₂, which is partly covered by selling the captured CO₂ to nearby greenhouses. Climateworks hopes to dramatically reduce this cost and aims to be capturing 1% of global emissions each year by 2025. Carbon Brief's [coverage](#) of the plant launch examines the research available on the costs and energy requirements of DAC.

UK Climate and Energy Research and Policy

Results of Energy Institute's 2017 Energy Barometer survey

Energy professionals surveyed for the Energy Institute's 2017 [Energy Barometer survey](#) say political risk is a material concern for the UK energy system. The survey flagged access to a skilled workforce as a Brexit priority, along with clarity and commitment on energy policy during the negotiations. There were calls for existing EU energy and climate laws and close ties to the single energy market to be retained. Energy efficiency was ranked the highest policy priority by the professionals surveyed; and Trump's decision on the Paris Agreement was flagged as a concern but not felt to be insurmountable.

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UKERC phase 3 research fund projects announced

The UK Energy Research Centre (UKERC) has [announced](#) the latest round of projects under its Phase 3 Research Fund. The three new projects will focus on: the integration of low-carbon heat pathways with storage; the impacts of multi-level policymaking on the UK energy system; and the impact on non-energy policies on the energy system.

Driving down emissions from road transport

Policy Exchange have published a [report](#) which provides a picture of recent trends in road use, and a review of the main technological options to address road transport emissions – from new technologies, to making conventional vehicles more efficiency, and encouraging people to take public transport. The report argues that the Government needs to take a more coordinated approach to addressing the twin problems of carbon emissions and air pollution from road use.

Renewable energy statistics 2017

The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) has published its [Renewable Energy Statistics 2017](#) yearbook which shows data sets on renewable power-generation capacity for 2007-2016, renewable power generation for 2007-2015 and renewable energy balances for approx. 100 countries and areas for 2014 and 2015. It also features statistics on investments in renewable energy from 18 major multi-lateral, bilateral and national development financial institutions for the period 2009-2015.

Scotland Climate Change Bill consultation

The Scottish Government is [consulting](#) on a new Climate Change Bill, increasing the 2050 target to at least 90% emissions reduction.

European climate change policy case studies

ClimateXChange has published a [set of case studies](#) which review relevant national climate change and energy strategies, plans and policies from elsewhere in Europe. The research has shown that our case study countries are adopting a range of approaches to climate change policy which includes setting legally binding emissions reduction targets, implementing non-statutory targets, or simply following / committing to targets set by the EU for all member states.

Geothermal synthesis report

A synthesis [report](#) of four feasibility studies supported by the Geothermal Energy Challenge Fund has been published by ClimateXChange and Scottish Carbon Capture and Storage. The report gives a brief overview of each of the projects, and key learning points from each report.

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Review of light and shadow effects from wind turbines in Scotland

ClimateXChange has [published](#) a study of how light and shadow effects from wind farms are considered in the development planning process in Scotland. The findings of this study, which follows on from the 2015 [Wind Farm Impacts Study](#), aim to feed in to the Scottish Government thinking on how light and shadow effects are assessed and considered through the planning process, and potential inform future guidance for developers and planning authorities.

Climate Science, Impacts and Adaptation

Committee on Climate Change report to parliament

The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) has published a [summary and recommendations](#) from both the [Committee on Climate Change's 2017 Report to Parliament](#) and the [Adaptation Sub-Committee's 2017 Report to Parliament](#). It finds that:

- Two new plans covering emissions reductions and actions to prepare for climate change are needed to meet the UK's climate change objectives
- The plans to be developed by the new Government will be drawn up against a backdrop of changes that could help to deliver better policy. However, some of these changes also present risks to the delivery of those climate change plans
- Climate policy is increasingly connected to wider issues, leading to new opportunities to create multiple benefits from action to address climate change