

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

May 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

The Paris Agreement

President Donald Trump has [announced](#) that as of 1 June 2017 the US will cease all implementation of the Paris Agreement, including the nationally determined contribution (NDC) and the Green Climate Fund. In the same speech, President Trump said he is willing to work with Democratic leaders to either negotiate a way back in to the Paris Agreement, under terms that are 'fair to the United States', or to negotiate a new deal.

In a [statement](#) on this decision, the UNFCCC Secretariat said that it stands ready to engage in dialogue with the US government regarding its intention to renegotiate the modalities for the US participation in the agreement, and noted that the Agreement cannot be renegotiated based on the request of a single Party.

Some examples of the commentary released in the days following the announcement include:

[Top Imperial academics criticise US withdrawal from Paris climate deal](#)

Carbon Brief: [Global reaction: Trump pulls US out of Paris Agreement on climate change](#)

Carbon Brief: [President Trump decision to leave Paris Agreement is a colossal mistake](#)

[The Guardian view on Trump and climate change: galvanising the globe](#)

Map of international climate change laws

The Grantham Institute on Climate Change and the Sabin Center on Climate Change Law have produced a [database](#) which includes more than 1,200 relevant policies across 164 countries, which account for 95% of global greenhouse gas emissions. This work has shown a 20-fold increase in the number of global climate change laws since 1997. The database shows the extent to which climate change legislation has permeated global political discourse, and variations in approach between developed and developing countries. The full country profile for the UK can be viewed [here](#).

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Combating climate change could boost G20 economies

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has released a report calling on policymakers to integrate measures to tackle climate change into regular economic policy. The [‘Investing in Climate, Investing in Growth’](#) report advises that G20 countries should adopt a combination of pro-growth and pro-environmental policies, driving investment in technology and infrastructure that is low in emissions and resistant to changes in climate.

Petersberg climate dialogue

The [eighth Petersberg Climate Dialogue](#) took place from 22-23 May 2017 in Berlin, Germany. The dialogue, which focused on the theme ‘Working together on solutions’, was attended by Ministers from 35 countries to discuss measures needed for the complete, effective and swift implementation of the Paris Agreement. The talks also focused on adaptation to climate change, national long-term strategies and development paths towards a greenhouse gas neutral global economy and concluded with a commitment to the Paris Agreement and its ambitious implementation.

Swiss referendum on renewable energy

Swiss [voters have backed](#) the government’s plan to provide almost a billion Swiss Francs in subsidies for renewable energy, ban new nuclear power plants, and support struggling utilities in a binding referendum. The Energy Strategy 2050 law focuses on what customers and taxpayers will pay for the measures.

Bangladesh to impose carbon tax

[Bangladesh is set to impose a carbon tax](#) in June in the country’s annual budget, as part of a larger suite of ‘green’ measures.

Climate change policies in Australia

The Australian government is currently [reviewing its climate change policies](#); the review will conclude by the end of 2017. The review is taking stock of Australia’s progress in reducing emissions to ensure the government’s policies remain effective in achieving Australia’s 2030 target and Paris Agreement commitments. Prof David Karoly, University of Melbourne presented the review at the [Grantham Institute](#), Imperial College London on 7 June 2017.

Bonn climate change conference

The [Bonn climate change conference](#) convened from 8-18 May 2017 and included the 46th sessions of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI 46), and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA 46), and the third session of the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement (APA 1-3). Considerable time was devoted to advance efforts to operationalise the Paris Agreement, under the three subsidiary bodies. Work on the Paris

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Agreement Rulebook advanced in incremental steps, leaving considerable work for [COP23](#), taking place in November 2017. Carbon Brief has prepared a [key summary of outcomes](#) from the conference.

UK Climate and Energy Research and Policy

Energy should be treated as a special case in Brexit negotiations

A [report](#) by Chatham House, the University of Exeter and the UK Energy Research Centre (UKERC), argues there are strong practical reasons why the UK and EU should treat energy as a special case during Brexit negotiations. The report says finding common ground on energy during the Brexit negotiations would benefit both the UK and the remaining EU27, while compromise may be relatively easier to achieve than for other areas. CarbonBrief has written a [breakdown](#) of the policy areas the UK will have to address in the negotiations.

What future for existing gas network infrastructure in a low carbon world?

On 20 July 2017, the Sustainable Gas Institute will [launch](#) its '[White Paper 3: What future for existing gas network infrastructure in a low carbon world?](#)' The paper looks at the evidence surrounding the decarbonisation potential of existing gas network infrastructure, including options arising from research around: supplying bio-methane through existing gas networks; supplying low carbon hydrogen through the existing gas distribution network; and using power to gas technology to turn renewable electricity to gas for existing gas networks.

Climate Science, Impacts and Adaptation

Myths and facts about biopower

A series of blogs by Energy Post explore some of the constraints, challenges and controversy that surrounds bioenergy. The blogs include: [Part 1. Myths and facts about biopower](#); [Part 2. Climate science for bioenergy is lost in the woods](#); and [Part 3. What does the future hold?](#)

In search of 'good' energy policy

The Energy@Cambridge Strategic Research Initiative Grand Challenge has been running a seminar series called '[In Search of 'Good' Energy Policy](#)'. Energy policy themes from different disciplinary perspectives (economics, history, philosophy, theology, law, anthropology, psychology, and engineering) have been explored with the objective of identifying principles and processes for 'good' energy policy. Video interviews with past speakers and recordings of the seminars can be viewed [online](#).

The Centre for Energy Policy at the University of Strathclyde has also been running a series of events, www.climateexchange.org.uk

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