

**NUCLEAR POLITICS**

European Taxonomy / Commission Announces Plans To Include Nuclear Energy

By David Dalton
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Move is subject to opinions from two more expert groups



The European commission has announced that it will include nuclear power in the EU's sustainable taxonomy under a complimentary delegated act that will confirm the energy source is as sustainable as other taxonomy-compliant power technologies.

According to [a commission communication](#), the delegated act will be consistent with the conclusions of a Joint Research Centre report on nuclear power.

The JRC, the commission's scientific expert arm, was asked to assess whether the EU should label nuclear power as a green investment. It concluded that the fuel qualifies as sustainable and does no more harm to human health or to the environment than other electricity production technologies already included in [the bloc's taxonomy](#).

The commission confirmed, however, that nuclear energy's status is subject to the opinions of two further expert groups. A review of the JRC's report is being carried out by the Euratom Article 31 experts group and the scientific committee on health, environmental and emerging risks (Scheer). The commission said these reviews will "complete the scientific evaluation" and be finalised in June 2021.

The commission did not say when the complimentary delegated act would be published, although a spokesman suggested in a press conference on Wednesday that it could be by the end of the year.

The commission said the EU taxonomy is a "robust, science-based transparency tool for companies and investors". It introduces clear performance criteria for determining which economic activities make a substantial contribution to the Green Deal objectives. The Green Deal, [published in December 2019](#), sets out how to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050.

Brussels-based nuclear industry group Foratom said it was delighted to finally have some clarity on what the commission is going to do with the conclusions of the JRC report.

Foratom director-general Yves Desbazeille said: "It shows that the commission is willing to recognise that its taxonomy needs to be based on the science if it is to be credible and successful."

Mr Desbazeille added, however, that to ensure that taxonomy does not lead to market distortions the commission must publish the complimentary delegated act as quickly as possible. "We believe that this could be done in September 2021 and thus enable nuclear to be added to a second set of delegated acts – relating to the 'do no significant harm' criteria – due at the end of this year."

The do no significant harm criteria assess energy generation technologies under the taxonomy have been assessed on whether they do not cause significant harm to other EU environmental objectives.

The taxonomy aims at creating a common language that investors can refer to when investing in projects and economic activities that have a substantial positive impact on the climate and the environment.

It came into force on 12 July 2020, but left a final decision on some technical criteria to be included in delegated acts subject to expert review and public consultation. Delegated acts are essentially supplementary regulations that supplement or amend non-essential parts of EU legislation.

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A March 2020 report by a commission technical expert group omitted nuclear energy from its recommendations on the taxonomy rules, saying it was unable to conclude that the industry's value chain meets these criteria. The nuclear industry and scientific organisations have been calling for this [to be reviewed](#). The commission asked the JRC to report on the issue.



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