RESPONSE REPORT

TRUMP'S TRADE DEAL KILLS EU CLIMATE GOALS

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wePlanet™

SUMMARY

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Mark Lynas is Head of Policy at WePlanet. He is the author of several books on environmental issues, serves as a climate advisor to political leaders, and has written extensively for international media. He has also co-authored peer-reviewed scientific papers on vaccines, climate change, and GMOs.

On 27 July it was announced that in its trade deal with Donald Trump the EU had committed to buying $750bn of fossil fuels from the United States over the next three years. This means more than tripling current levels of fossil fuels from the US, which are primarily oil, coal and LNG.

WePlanet calculates that the emissions from these fossil fuels will total 10 billion tonnes of CO2. We additionally calculate that this **is 150% of a fair-shares carbon budget for the 1.5C Paris goal.**

Therefore the EU-Trump deal is more than one and a half times more carbon emissions than the EU's remaining 1.5C carbon budget. The situation is worse because this does not include emissions from domestically produced fossil fuels or other emissions sectors and sources.

WePlanet therefore demands that the EU trade deal's fossil fuels component - which is anyway not legally binding and is likely unenforceable - be **substituted with clean energy** and that if not available from US sources and partners this should come from elsewhere.

INTRODUCTION

On 27 July 2025 it was announced that the EU's Ursula von der Leyen and President Donald Trump had agreed on a trade deal. While most of the media coverage focused on the unbalanced nature of the deal regarding tariffs, only a small amount of attention was given to a commitment by the EU to buy $750bn of fossil fuels from the United States over the next three years.

This report quantifies the carbon emissions implications of these American fossil fuels imports to Europe. We find that not surprisingly they blow Europe's climate targets out of the water. At a time where Europe is supposedly racing towards clean energy - renewables, nuclear and others - a massive reversion to burning American fossil fuels would have a devastating impact on the climate.

The 27 July deal is just a political agreement, and the details still need to be hammered out. It also needs approval from EU member states. Thus there is still time to reconsider the fossil fuels commitment, which is the most environmentally damaging part of the agreement. European nations and citizens must say no to the Trump deal, and refocus instead on the clean energy transition.

THE AGREEMENT

According to the EU's report from the trade deal meeting with Trump[1]: "The EU intends to procure US liquified natural gas, oil, and nuclear energy products with an expected offtake valued at $750 billion (ca. €700 billion) over the next three years."

Under the headline "Unleashing American Energy" the White House press briefing stated unambiguously[2]: "The EU will double down on America as the Energy Superpower by purchasing $750 billion of U.S. energy exports through 2028. This will strengthen the United States' energy dominance, reduce European reliance on adversarial sources, and narrow our trade deficit with the EU."

The EU later clarified - as reported by Euronews - that while it negotiated the deal on behalf of all 27 member states, it "lacks the competence to determine the amount, the type and the origin of the energy supplies acquired by governments and companies" and that therefore the deal is not legally binding[3].

"It's important to remember that the European Commission is not buying any of these commodities and neither is the US government selling any of this," a Commission spokesperson told Euronews. "These are all commercial decisions made by the companies: those companies that buy and those companies that sell."

There was also a suggestion that some of the $750 bn might include nuclear purchases, potentially including SMRs. However this seems unlikely under such a short timescale so the analysis that follows will focus on fossil fuels.

THE NUMBERS

QUOTABLE NUMBERS AND SUPPORTING CALCULATIONS

EU imports from the United States of oil, natural gas and coal totalled around $76 bn in 2024. Thus reaching $250bn annually requires more than tripling fossil fuels imports into Europe from the United States[4].

According to Eurostat's numbers for March 2025, the EU's energy imports for 2024 were[5]:

LNG: 80 Mt
Oil: 447 Mt
Coal: 63 Mt

The US had a 44% share of LNG, 15% share of oil and 32% of coal. So the US exports of fossil fuels to EU in 2024 were in terms of mass (Mt):

LNG: 35
Oil: 67
Coal: 20

We need to multiply these by 3.3 to meet the EU's commitment to Donald Trump, assuming that the proportions of each fossil fuel remain the same over the period of the deal, starting next year in 2026.

LNG: 35x3.3 = 115
Oil: 67x3.3 = 221
Coal: 20x3.3 = 66

For three years, the period of the deal, we need to multiply again by three. So the totals for each fossil fuels for the deal period of three years would be as follows (Mt):

LNG 115x3 = 345
Oil 221x3 = 663
Coal 66x3 = 198

THE NUMBERS

QUOTABLE NUMBERS AND SUPPORTING CALCULATIONS

To work out the climate impact we need to consider that these different fossil fuels have different emissions when combusted. We will also include upstream emissions insofar as these are known to represent the broader impact on the climate.

For LNG we have emissions intensity of upstream (lifecycle) of 20 grammes of carbon dioxide equivalent per megajoule (g CO2eq/MJ)[6] and combustion emissions of 53 kg of CO2 per million Btu[7]. Therefore the total emissions are 73 kg/GJ.

To get a GJ figure we need to work out the energy content of natural gas, which is 55 GJ/t[8]. The energy in the total LNG tonnage of 345 Mt when converted to emissions gives a total CO2 emission of 7.3 Gt[9].

For oil we assume all oil is gasoline for ease of calculation, thus we need to calculate the CO2 emissions of 663 Mt and derive a figure of 2 Gt[10].

For coal we need to calculate CO2 from 198 Mt of coal and derive a figure of 0.6 Gt[11].

Adding these together we derive a total emissions budget from the EU-US trade deal's fossil fuels component of 9.9 or 10 Gt of CO2. (This is not all additional, as a proportion of carbon is already being emitted from US fossil fuels imports.)

CONCLUSION

What does this mean for the climate? According to the latest estimates, the global carbon budget left to have a 50:50 chance of meeting the Paris climate goal of 1.5C is 130 bn tonnes of CO2[12].

While 10 Gt is less than 8% of the global 1.5C carbon budget, it is clearly unfair to assume that the EU can grab the whole world's budget. So to work out a fair share on a per capita basis we need to divide by the EU's percentage of the world's population[13].

This gives a fair share of the remaining budget to the EU of 6.5bn tonnes CO2[14]. Given that the EU intends to emit 10 bn tonnes of CO2 from US fossil fuels imports alone (not including domestic fossil fuels or emissions from other sources in Europe) that means taking up 150% of its fair-shares carbon budget.

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ABOUT WEPLANET

WePlanet is a network of grassroots charitable organisations driven by science-based solutions to climate change, biodiversity collapse and the need to eliminate poverty.

WePlanet was founded in 2022. The start-up of our activities has been made possible by membership fees and donations as well as very welcome contributions from the Rodel Foundation, Quadrature Climate Foundation, The Dreamery Foundation, Founders Pledge and the Anthropocene Institute. WePlanet neither solicits nor accepts corporate funding.

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3. https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2025/07/29/eu-and-us-spin-conflicting-versions-of-trade-deal
4. 250/75 = 3.3
5. Eurostat, energy_update_MAR_2025 - tab 'Extra EU imports'.
6. https://www.iea.org/news/new-iea-report-assesses-emissions-from-lng-supply-and-maps-out-opportunities-to-reduce-them
7. https://angeassociation.com/resource/lng-emissions/. Fortunately MBtu is 1-1 equivalent with GJ so these units are equivalent if we multiply grammes of CO2 by 1000 to get kg per GJ. The total emissions are 73 kg/GJ.
8. https://www.elgas.com.au/for-business/lng-liquefied-natural-gas-methane/
9. As follows: 345,000,000t x 55 GJ/t = ,18,975,000,000 GJ. Multiply by 73 kg CO2/GJ. = 7,318,975,000,000 kg = 7,318,975,000 t CO2. 7.3 Gt CO2.
10. As follows, using IPCC emissions factors from Table 1 of IPCC, 1996. https://www.ipcc-nggip.iges.or.jp/public/gp/bgp/2_1_CO2_Stationary_Combustion.pdf. Gasoline is 19 t/C/TJ and 45 GJ/t. 663,000,000t x 45 = 29,835,000,000 GJ or 29,835,000 TJ. x 19 = 556,865,000 tC, multiply by 3.67 to convert to CO2 = 2,080,394,550 or 2 Gt CO2.
11. As follows using IPCC factors from above. For anthracite, 29 GJ/t energy and 27 tC/TJ. 198,000,000 x 29 = 5,742,000 TJ (divide by 1000 from MJ). x27 = 155,034,000 tC then x 3.67 to CO2 = 568,974,780 = 0.6 Gt.
12. Forster, P. et al, 2025. Indicators of Global Climate Change 2024: annual update of key indicators of the state of the climate system and human influence, Earth System Science Data, 17, 6. https://doi.org/10.5194/essd-17-2641-2025. Table 8.
13. The EU's population is 450 million. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Population_and_population_change_statistics. Global population is 8.3 bn, so the EU has 5% of the world's population.
14. 5% of 130bn = 6.5bn.

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