Europe Unveils Plan to Shift From Fossil Fuels

BRUSSELS — In what may be a seminal moment in the global battle against climate change, the European Union unveiled a sweeping plan on Monday to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 55 percent by 2030 compared with 1990 levels.

The proposals, if passed, would see the last gasoline or diesel cars sold in the European Union by 2035, the last coal power plants operating by 2040 and a new carbon border tax that could impose duties on imports from countries with less stringent climate policies.

The plan also calls for a Social Climate Fund, raised from the carbon border tax, to compensate low-income households for the higher costs of living associated with the transition to clean energy.

While the proposals are filled with details — including a plan to phase out free carbon credits for some industries, and to phase in a carbon price for products like cement and cruise ships — they were met with both praise and skepticism by environmental organizations and industry lobbyists.

The most radical, and possibly contentious, proposal would impose taxes on some imports from countries with less stringent climate policies.

The European Union, the world’s largest trading bloc, is the third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases, after China and the United States, but it has already set a goal of hitting net-zero emissions by 2050.

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