



# South Africa – EU Town Hall on Border Carbon Adjustment: An Update on Developments in the EU

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**Andrei Marcu, ERCST**  
**Aaron Cosbey, ERCST**

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Roundtable on  
Climate Change and  
Sustainable Transition

# Why Are We Discussing This Now?

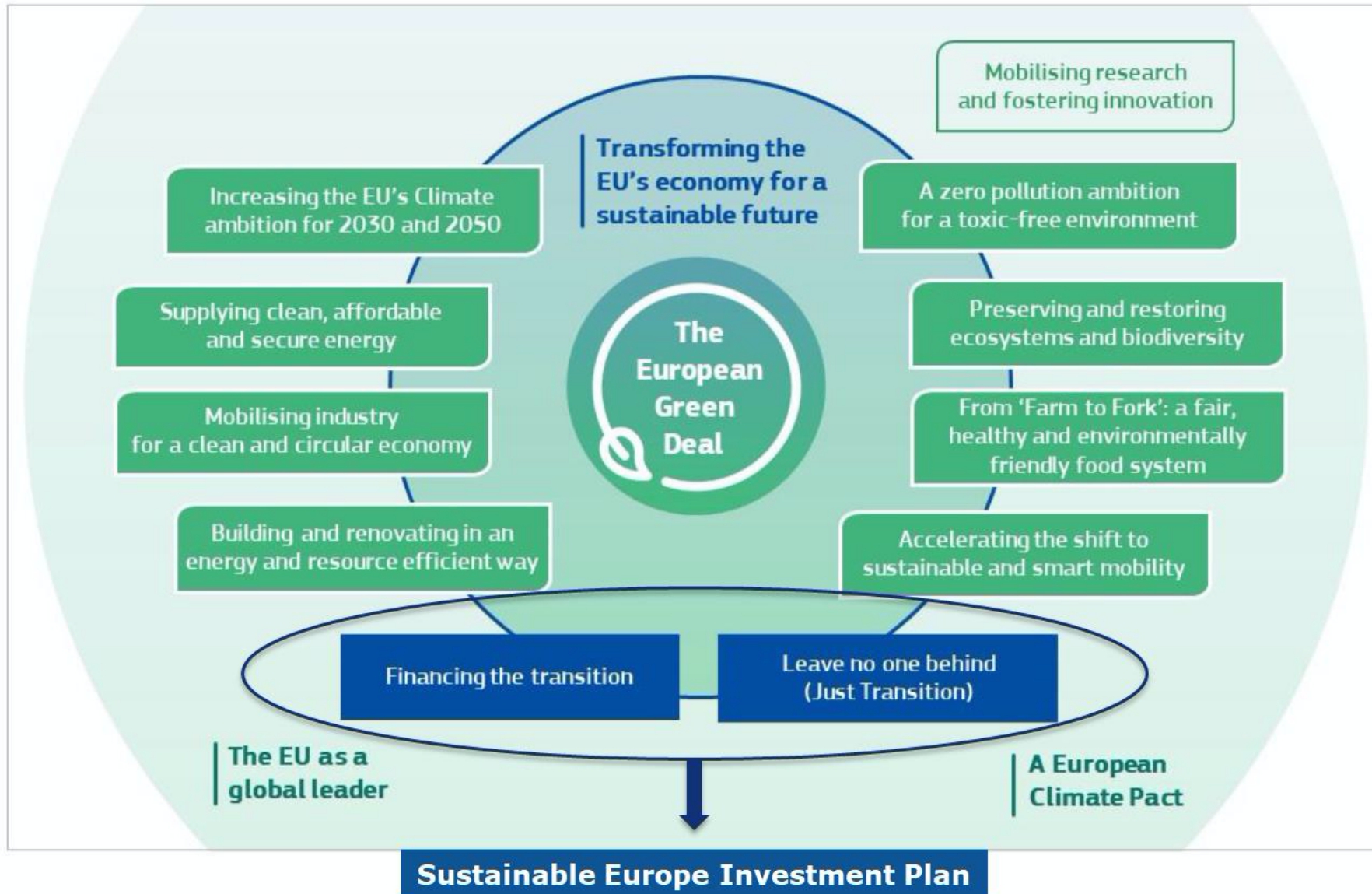
- **Asymmetrical climate change policies**
- **Old methods may not work**
- **Increased level of ambition**
  - Paris Agreement → continued asymmetry of climate efforts
  - European Green Deal
  - Carbon neutrality targets
- **How do we deal with competitive pressures and carbon leakage?**
  - Free allocation/compensation of indirect costs
  - Internationalization/linking/Article 6 Paris Agreement
  - Border carbon adjustments
  - Other options (e.g. consumptions charges; contracts for difference; product standards)?
    - **Consumption charges:** charge that extends the carbon price to consumers based on the weight and type of material in a final product
    - **Contracts for difference:** financial award for low-carbon investments based on the amount of avoided carbon and a set carbon price

## Context: „European Green Deal“

New European Commission under Ursula von der Leyen took office in December 2019, announces ambitious **‘European Green Deal’** with the following elements:

- Climate neutrality by 2050, to be enshrined in a ‘European Climate Law’ (also strong push to increase 2030 target from current 40%)
  - Action on circular economy (e.g. single-use plastics), biodiversity conservation & sustainable farming, adaptation, ‘zero-pollution’
  - ‘Sustainable Europe Investment Plan’ of €1 trillion for 2021-2030
  - **‘Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism’** to address trade impacts
- Europe’s executive, the European Commission, confirmed its priorities in the **State of the Union** on September 16, 2020

# The „European Green Deal“




# Europe's Border Carbon Adjustment: State of Play

- December 2019: **European Council** endorses work, states that 'facilities in third countries need to adhere to the highest environmental ... standards'
- March 2020: **Inception Impact Assessment Roadmap** and public consultation on the elements of the CBAM feedback IA; 219 submissions
- May 2020: European Commission mentions CBAM revenue ('€5 to €14 billion per year') as potential source for EU Recovery Plan (**'Next Generation EU'**)
- Confirmed by the historical **European Council** in July (EU budget 2021-2027, Recovery Package) – BCA introduction by 2022...
- Next steps: **public consultations** until October 28; **proposal** expected around **June 2021**

# Member States Support BCA

## EU nations pressure Brussels to bring forward carbon border tax proposals

Published 21:05 on February 27, 2020 / Last updated at 21:05 on February 27, 2020 / EMEA, EU ETS  Carbon Pulse

EU member states want Brussels to propose an EU carbon border adjustment tax earlier than 2021 to help safeguard the bloc's heavy industry, several national ministers said on Thursday.

## Council of the European Union meeting (27 February 2020):

- *“The competitiveness of our industry is at stake due to the risk of carbon leakage, so we need to start working on in the second half of this year”, **Maria Reyes Maroto, Spanish** Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism*
- *Germany, France and Italy [are also] “impatiently waiting” for Commission’s proposals on border measures*

## Member States Support BCA

- **Germany / France** supported the idea of CBAM supplementing the existing instruments in line with WTO in the [statement](#) on the **Recovery Package 18, May**
- The Ursula's von der Leyen **Commission** put the BCA among the fiscal issues (DG TAXUD) leading to EU's own resources and making it more likely to implement
- **Poland** is in line with the CBAM as a mechanism protecting EU's competitiveness and potential source of funding to the modernization / innovation / just transition mechanisms



# **Inception Impact Assessment and results**

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# Inception Impact Assessment Roadmap

(Published 4 March 2020)

## Timeline

- Feedback period: 4 March-1 April 2020
- Commission adoption: planned for second quarter 2021

## Issues to be studied:

- Type of policy instrument:
  - carbon tax on selected products (imports & domestic)
  - a new carbon customs duty or tax on imports
  - extension of the EU ETS to imports
- Methodological approach to evaluating the carbon content and carbon pricing of imported products
- Sectoral scope



Ref. Ares(2020)1350037 - 04/03/2020

INCEPTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT	
Inception Impact Assessments aim to inform citizens and stakeholders about the Commission's plans in order to allow them to provide feedback on the intended initiative and to participate effectively in future consultation activities. Citizens and stakeholders are in particular invited to provide views on the Commission's understanding of the problem and possible solutions and to share any relevant information that they may have, including on possible impacts of the different options.	
TITLE OF THE INITIATIVE	Carbon border adjustment mechanism
LEAD DG – RESPONSIBLE UNIT	DG TAXUD Unit C2
LIKELY TYPE OF INITIATIVE	Legislative proposal
INDICATIVE PLANNING	2021
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	<a href="https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en">https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en</a>
The Inception Impact Assessment is provided for information purposes only. It does not prejudice the final decision of the Commission on whether this initiative will be pursued or on its final content. All elements of the initiative described by the Inception Impact Assessment, including its timing, are subject to change.	

A. Context, problem definition and subsidiarity check
<p><b>Context</b> [max 10 lines]</p> <p>The European Green Deal adopted by the Commission on 11 December 2019 includes the goal of enshrining the long-term objective of climate neutrality by 2050 in legislation and increasing the EU's climate ambition to reduce greenhouse gases emissions by 50-55% from 1990 levels by 2030. In this context, the European Green Deal emphasized that "should differences in levels of ambition worldwide persist, as the EU increases its climate ambition, the Commission will propose a carbon border adjustment mechanism, for selected sectors, to reduce the risk of carbon leakage".</p> <p>The Paris Agreement on climate, as well as strong international diplomacy and leadership, are the EU's main instruments to achieve higher climate ambition globally. By COP26 in November in Glasgow, Paris Agreement Parties need to communicate or update their climate commitments and submit their mid-century strategies, in line with the Paris objectives. The EU will continue to work with partners to raise the global ambition.</p>
<p><b>Problem the initiative aims to tackle</b> [max 20 lines]</p> <p>As long as many international partners do not share the same climate ambition as the EU, there is a risk of carbon leakage. Carbon leakage occurs when production is transferred from the EU to other countries with lower ambition for emission reduction, or when EU products are replaced by more carbon-intensive imports. If this risk materialises, there will be no reduction in global emissions, and this will frustrate the efforts of the EU and its industries to meet the global climate objectives of the Paris Agreement.</p> <p>In this context, a carbon border adjustment mechanism would ensure that the price of imports reflect more accurately their carbon content. The measure would need to be designed to comply with World Trade Organization rules and other international obligations of the EU. It would be an alternative to the measures that currently address the risk of carbon leakage in the EU's Emissions Trading System ("EU ETS").</p> <p>Since 2013, the risk of carbon leakage has been effectively addressed for those sectors regulated under the EU ETS that are exposed to the risk of carbon leakage – such as for example steel - by granting free allowances, based on the emissions performance of the best installations under the system (benchmarks). The EU ETS Directive provides for this system to continue at least until 2030. In addition, since the price of carbon is incorporated in electricity prices and passed on to consumers, possibly becoming an indirect source of carbon leakage for some energy-intensive sectors, Member States have the possibility to compensate some electro-intensive industries for the increase in electricity prices resulting from the ETS, provided they comply with EU State aid rules.</p>
<p><b>Basis for EU intervention (legal basis and subsidiarity check)</b> [max 10 lines]</p> <p>The legal basis will depend on the design of the measure. Both article 192 (environmental measures including</p>

## ERCST Takeaways

- Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) topic of high interest and relatively **high on the agenda**
- The feedback was **generally positive** both from NGO and business circles
- Most submissions focus on the **essence of the mechanism**, less on the scope of the IIA itself
- As a consequence of submitted papers, there will be need for further thinking how to design the mechanism and a single or multiple **formula for calculating the adjustment**

# Public consultations

- Taking place 12 weeks until 28 October
- Questionnaire:
  - Design and coverage of the mechanism
  - Lists of potential sectors
  - Implementation issues
  - Impacts

**Draft ERCST Rationale public consultation questionnaire**



# Direction of ERCST Study

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# ERCST Activities

- **Project:** ‘Border Carbon Adjustments in the EU: Issues and Options’
  - Full **Report** 30 September 2020
  - 14 October the Methodology of Economic impact event
- Submitted **Feedback** to the Inception Impact Assessment consultation
- Ongoing **stakeholder engagement and convening:**
  - March 5<sup>th</sup>: Dissecting and Assessing CBAM Design Options
  - March 25<sup>th</sup>: High-Level International Roundtable
  - April 15<sup>th</sup>: Evaluating Alternative CBAM Scenarios
  - May 28<sup>th</sup>: Inception Impact Assessment Feedback Summary & Synthesis
  - June 9<sup>th</sup>: Exploring Alternatives to the CBAM
  - September 10<sup>th</sup> Public Consultations Discussion
- **International outreach** (‘Virtual Town Halls’) to EU trade partners: USA, South Korea, India, Japan, South Africa, Mexico, Russia, Ukraine

**Project website:** <https://ercst.org/border-carbon-adjustments-in-the-eu>

## Our Approach: Decomposing, Evaluating & Comparing

- **Nine Design Elements:**

- Coverage of trade flows
- Policy mechanism
- Geographic scope
- Sectoral scope
- Emissions scope
- Determination of embedded emissions
- Calculation of adjustment
- Use of revenue

- **Five Evaluation Criteria:**

- Environmental benefit
- Competitiveness benefit
- Legal feasibility
- Technical and administrative feasibility
- Political feasibility

- **Scenario-Building:**

- 'Most Probable'
- 'Play it Safe'
- 'Go Getter'

- **Comparisons with alternative instruments**

The image displays a collage of several overlapping tables from the ERCST report, illustrating the decomposition of instruments into design elements and their evaluation against five criteria. The tables are titled as follows:

- Coverage of Trade Flows**: Evaluates options like Imports, Exports, and Imports & Exports across environmental, competitiveness, and legal feasibility.
- Sectoral Scope**: Compares 'Basic Materials only (EITs)', 'Basic Materials (EITs) & Electricity', and 'Basic Materials (EITs) & More Complex Products'.
- Calculation of Adjustment**: Considers 'No consideration of foreign policies' and 'Consideration of price-based and regulatory policies'.
- Use of Revenue (1/2)**: Examines 'Refund to covered domestic firms' and 'Refund to covered foreign firms'.
- Emissions Scope**: Details 'Direct (Scope 1) Emissions', 'Indirect (Scope 2) Emissions from Energy', and 'Other Indirect (Scope 3) Emissions'.
- Determination of Embedded Emissions**: Looks at 'Calculation at product level (face shipment)' and 'Benchmark: best practice domestic/global'.
- Use of Revenue (2/2)**: Analyzes 'Domestic fund for climate innovation' and 'Domestic fund for competitiveness'.
- Implications for Free Trade**: Assesses 'Free Allocation Unaffected', 'Free Allocation Gradually Substituted', and 'Free Allocation Rescinded Immediately'.
- Geographic Scope**: Considers 'All Countries', 'Exemption of Least-Developed Countries', and 'Exemption on Environmental Grounds (often Pick-Party to Paris Agreement)'.
- Determination of Embedded Emissions (repeated)**: Further details benchmarking and assumptions for domestic and foreign producers.
- Scenario 1: 'Most Probable' (1/3)**: Provides a detailed comparison of 'Imports Only', 'Extension of the EU ETS', and 'Gradual Phase-out of Free Allocation' across all five evaluation criteria.

## Example: Decomposition of BCA Design Steps (here: 'Trade flow')

Option	Environmental Benefit	Competitiveness Benefit	Legal Feasibility	Technical & Administrative Feasibility	Political & Diplomatic Feasibility
Imports Only	Relatively greatest benefit due to maximum emissions coverage	Levels the playing field in the domestic market	Strongest case under Article XX GATT	More complex to implement due to data gaps and limited jurisdiction	Controversial as a unilateral, extraterritorial measure
Exports Only	Relatively lowest benefit due to reduced emissions coverage and pot. incentive for carbon-intensive exports	Levels the playing field in foreign markets	Risks being considered a forbidden subsidy under SCM Agreement; weak Art. XX GATT case	Least complex to implement because purely domestic and data readily available	Least controversial because purely territorial measure with no obligations for foreign producers
Imports & Exports	Environmental benefit between the two cases above	Levels the playing field in both domestic & foreign markets	Same as above, plus even greater risk under SCM Agreement	More complex to implement for imports due to data gaps and limited jurisdiction	Most controversial because of extraterritoriality and perceived protectionism



## Example: BCA Scenario-building (here: 'Most Probable', 1/3)

Design Element	Option	Environmental Benefit	Competitiveness Benefit	Legal Feasibility	Technical & Administrative Feasibility	Political & Diplomatic Feasibility
<b>Trade Flow Coverage</b>	Imports Only	Strong benefit due to maximum emissions coverage	Levels the playing field in the domestic market only	Strong case under Article XX GATT	Intermediate complexity due to data gaps and limited jurisdiction	Somewhat controversial as a unilateral, extra-territorial measure
<b>Policy Mechanism</b>	Extension of the EU ETS	Neutral (depends on level of carbon price and price volatility/predictability in market)	Neutral	Can be adopted with qualified majority vote, but potentially risky under trade law	High complexity due to need to integrate in/link to EU ETS market	Likely neutral (relative to other options, such as carbon tax)
<b>Effect on Free Allocation</b>	Gradual Phase-out of Free Allocation	Moderately beneficial because price signal strengthened	Moderately beneficial: playing field inside/outside EU levelled during transition period	Moderate risk of violating SCM Agreement; relatively strong case under Art. XX GATT	Relatively most difficult to implement due to added need to decide on transition process	Moderately controversial due to perceived fairness (no 'double protection' of EU producers)



## Example: Comparison of BCA Scenarios

Scenario	Design Choices	Environmental Benefit	Competitiveness Benefit	Legal Feasibility	Technical & Administrative Feasibility	Political & Diplomatic Feasibility
<b>'Most Probable'</b>	<p><b>Trade Flow Coverage:</b> Imports only</p> <p><b>Policy Mechanism:</b> Extension of the EU ETS</p> <p><b>Geographic Scope:</b> Exemption of LDCs</p> <p><b>Sectoral Scope:</b> Basic materials &amp; electricity</p> <p><b>Emissions Scope:</b> Scope 1 &amp; Scope 2</p> <p><b>Calc. of Embedded Carbon:</b> Benchmark (avg. EU)</p> <p><b>Calculation of Adjustment:</b> Price-based policies</p> <p><b>Use of Revenue:</b> Domestic innovation fund</p>	Extends carbon price to imports & replaces free allocation; but use of averages limits benefits	Effectively levels the playing field in the domestic market, but not in foreign markets, nor downstream	Likely to pass muster under WTO law due to Article XX GATT; requires qualified majority vote in the EU Council	Intermediate complexity in terms of data needs and administrative/regulatory framework	Intermediate risk of controversy as a unilateral, extra-territorial measure
<b>'Play it Safe'</b>	<p><b>Trade Flow Coverage:</b> Imports only</p> <p><b>Policy Mechanism:</b> Extension of the EU ETS</p> <p><b>Geographic Scope:</b> Exemption of LDCs</p> <p><b>Sectoral Scope:</b> Basic materials only</p> <p><b>Emissions Scope:</b> Scope 1 only</p> <p><b>Calc. of Embedded Carbon:</b> Benchmark (best practice)</p> <p><b>Calculation of Adjustment:</b> Price-based policies</p> <p><b>Use of Revenue:</b> International climate fund</p>	Extends carbon price to imports; limited scope and use of generous averages limits benefits	Somewhat levels the playing field in the domestic market, but not in foreign markets, nor downstream	Very likely to pass muster under WTO law due to Article XX GATT; requires qualified majority vote in the EU Council	Lowest complexity in terms of data needs and administrative/regulatory framework	Lowest risk of controversy as a unilateral, extra-territorial measure
<b>'Go Getter'</b>	<p><b>Trade Flow Coverage:</b> Imports and exports</p> <p><b>Policy Mechanism:</b> Extension of the EU ETS</p> <p><b>Geographic Scope:</b> Exemption of clim. leaders</p> <p><b>Sectoral Scope:</b> Basic+complex goods, elec.</p> <p><b>Emissions Scope:</b> Scope 1, 2 &amp; 3</p> <p><b>Calc. of Embedded Carbon:</b> Actual emissions</p> <p><b>Calculation of Adjustment:</b> Price and regulat. policies</p> <p><b>Use of Revenue:</b> Domestic innovation fund</p>	Extends carbon price to imports, but exempts exports; broad scope and actual carbon intensity strengthen benefits	Effectively levels the playing field in domestic and foreign markets as well as downstream	My not pass muster under WTO law due to SCM and complexity; requires qualified majority vote in the EU Council	Highest complexity in terms of data needs and administrative/regulatory framework	Highest risk of controversy as a unilateral, extra-territorial measure

## Example: Comparison across Instruments

Policy Option	Proposal/ Variant	Environmental Benefit	Competitive- ness Benefit	Legal Feasibility	Technical & Administrative Feasibility	Political & Diplomatic Feasibility
<b>Border Carbon Adjustment</b>	“Most Likely”	Extends carbon price to imports & replaces free allocation; but use of averages limits benefits	Effectively levels the playing field in the domestic market, but not in foreign markets, nor downstream	Should pass muster under WTO law due to Article XX GATT; requires qualified majority vote in the EU Council	Intermediate complexity due to data needs and administrative/regulatory framework	High degree of controversy as a unilateral, extra-territorial measure
<b>Consumption Charge</b>	“Inclusion of Consumption”	Internalizes cost of carbon across value chain, but no or limited differentiation	Without free allocation: only protects against its own competitiveness impacts	Does not impinge on WTO/state aid rules; but may require a unanimous vote in the EU Council	High complexity due to data needs and administrative/regulatory framework	Likely minimally controversial as purely internal measure, but increases prices → material substitution
<b>Contracts for Difference</b>	“Carbon Contract for Difference”	Strong incentive to scale up early-stage clean technology; but scope limited to selected projects (and by available resources)	Levels the playing field between clean and dirty products, but only affects competition w. foreign producers for selected projects	Does not impinge on WTO rules if open to foreign bidders; should pass muster under state aid rules if competitive tender	Relatively easier to implement due to limited scope and provision of data	Relatively least controversial as a support measure

# Takeaways from Analysis & Stakeholder Events (I)

## Selected Design Elements:

- **Trade flow coverage:** Debate about leakage also needs to consider role of European exports and their competitiveness in foreign markets
- **Free allocation:** Replacing free allocation will face considerable pushback in the EU, making a phased approach more likely
- **Sectoral scope:** Basic goods with relatively low trade-intensity – such as cement – may offer a good piloting opportunity; also possible: electricity
- **Determination of embedded emissions:** Use of default values with individual adjustment is very likely, but choice of default plays large role
- **Revenue use:** International revenue transfers face political obstacles

## Takeaways from Analysis & Stakeholder Events (II)

### General Observations:

- **Objective:** No credible BCA can avoid violating free trade disciplines; justification as an **environmentally** motivated measure is thus key
- **Intrinsic tradeoffs** across multiple criteria between narrower scope and more aggregation vs. broader scope and more granularity
- **Downstream impacts** and **substitution effects** have to be considered
- Avoiding **resource shuffling** and evasion tactics will be a challenge
- **Other instruments**, e.g. consumption charges & contracts for difference, can help address certain aspects of leakage, but there are **no silver bullets**



**Thank you!**

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