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UK Climate Change Committee's 2023 Progress Report Urges Action to Meet Climate Targets

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The UK Climate Change Committee (CCC) recently released its **2023 statutory report**, evaluating the UK's progress towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions and meeting carbon reduction targets. This report, mandated by the Climate Change Act, offers a comprehensive analysis of the nation's efforts in tackling climate change. The CCC is a non-departmental public body, sponsored by the **Department for Energy Security and Net Zero**, that advises the government on emissions targets and reports to Parliament on progress made in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The CCC's report, published on June 28, 2023, sheds light on critical aspects of the UK's climate journey. The report was prompted by the government's release of the **Carbon Budget Delivery Plan (CBDP)** in March 2023, which detailed policies aimed at achieving carbon budgets and net-zero goals. While the CCC acknowledges the increased transparency as a result of the CBDP, it expresses reservations about the pace of implementation, citing concerns about the nation's ability to meet medium-term targets, especially 2030 goals.

Key Concerns Raised by the CCC

The CCC's report outlines specific areas of concern where immediate action is required to enhance the UK's climate performance. These concerns include:

- **Fossil Fuel Support:** The CCC highlights that despite climate commitments, the government continues to endorse new oil and gas projects and airport expansions. This raises questions,

according to the report's authors, about the nation's dedication to transitioning to a low-carbon economy.

- *Decarbonized Steel Production:* A lack of clear policy for decarbonizing steel production is identified as a significant gap in the UK's efforts to reduce emissions in industrial sectors. This omission could hamper progress in achieving comprehensive decarbonization targets.
- *Infrastructure Upgrades:* The CCC emphasizes the necessity of rapid reforms in planning regarding and upgrades to the country's electricity infrastructure. Such actions are crucial to facilitate a transition to cleaner energy sources and sustainable land use practices.
- *Hydrogen Integration:* The report raises concerns about the delayed strategic decision regarding the role of hydrogen in heating systems. The CCC suggests that postponing this decision until 2026 could impede progress towards decarbonizing heating systems efficiently.
- *Priority Recommendations:* The CCC notes that key government departments have not met the priority recommendations outlined in the 2022 report. The report includes 27 priority recommendations for both the government and individual departments, highlighting the need for a more synchronized approach to policy implementation.

Taking the Temperature: The CCC's 2023 progress report highlights the challenges associated with meeting government climate-related commitments. In that sense, the UK's struggles mirror those faced by countries globally, where progress toward net zero goals and increasing transparency may not happen quickly enough to achieve commitments on previously announced timelines, as we have discussed with respect to, among others, [Australia](#), [Switzerland](#), [the EU](#), and [countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations region](#). While the UK has a wealth of research and expertise, the 2023 progress report serves as a call for immediate and coordinated action for funding improvements and a swifter transition to low-carbon technologies.