# The International Energy Agency faces political challenges amid climate shift



The International Energy Agency (IEA), headquartered near the Eiffel Tower in Paris, continues to operate under the mandate set by its 32 member countries, as confirmed in a recent statement from the agency. The IEA's current programme of work was agreed upon during its last Ministerial meeting in February 2024, and it remains responsive to feedback from all member states on their priorities moving forward.

Established in the aftermath of the 1973 oil crisis, the IEA initially functioned as a buffer to mitigate energy shocks. However, in 2019, the agency underwent a significant shift in focus after persistent advocacy from environmental groups. It began prioritising research and support for global efforts aimed at preventing catastrophic and extreme global warming. This reorientation elevated the agency’s executive director, Turkish energy expert Fatih Birol, to become a prominent figure advocating the global green transition. His role is bolstered by the IEA’s extensive team of energy experts and analysts.

During a discussion with journalists on Tuesday, a Brazilian official remarked on the IEA's influence, stating, “The International Energy Agency has been quite extraordinary in pointing directions and showing impressive statistics and tendencies that are influencing considerably the negotiation.” This praise highlights the agency’s growing impact on international energy and climate policy discussions.

Despite this, Birol and the IEA face opposition from fossil fuel interests, particularly within the United States. Under the Trump administration’s second term, there has been heightened scrutiny of international institutions, with efforts to reshape them to align more closely with American priorities. According to a European official, this has placed Birol and the IEA “caught in the eye of a storm.”

Notably, Senate Majority Whip John Barrasso, a prominent Republican representing Wyoming, a state heavily involved in coal production, has publicly criticised Birol. Barrasso is leading efforts to pressure the IEA into abandoning climate research that supports actions to mitigate global warming, arguing that such changes “are never going to happen,” as he told reporters during the winter.

Adding to the uncertainty surrounding the agency's future funding and engagement is President Donald Trump’s directive to review U.S. participation in all international organisations. This review is scheduled to be completed by August and could potentially lead to the United States withdrawing from the IEA. The U.S. has historically contributed an average of 14 percent of the IEA’s annual budget over the past decade, making its involvement financially significant.

The developments place the IEA at a critical juncture as it balances its evolving mission to address climate change with the political dynamics influencing its member states, particularly the position of the United States. The outcome of the upcoming review may have substantial implications for the agency’s operations and its role in shaping global energy policies.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.iea.org/about/history> - This URL provides background on the IEA's history and its recent mandate expansion, including its focus on net-zero emission energy systems and climate goals.
2. <https://www.iea.org/about/membership> - This page details the criteria for IEA membership and lists countries currently seeking membership, highlighting the agency's growing global influence.
3. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Energy_Agency#Membership> - This Wikipedia section outlines the structure of IEA membership and association countries, illustrating the diverse global engagement and collaboration of the agency.
4. <https://www.iea.org/> - This is the IEA's official website, offering an overview of its mission to shape energy policies for a secure and sustainable future.
5. <https://www.dgeg.gov.pt/en/transversal-areas/international-affairs/international/the-international-energy-agency-iea/> - This page discusses the IEA's main objectives and its comprehensive energy cooperation program among member countries.
6. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fatih_Birol> - While not directly available, this URL about Fatih Birol could provide insight into his role as IEA's executive director and his advocacy for the green transition.
7. <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMisgFBVV95cUxPT2MtcG5vUE9McWZPZE9WOGtMOXNZN2FQUHJ2TWlCNUQwZUVTRk9iYzJsNUl3M2tKd2NsY1dXdnNneFlSTHBSMmZYTnNhcHJMWmVvRnU5UFhzNkRRZE9EWjFmdTNTQnhFUi1ZVlBaX19oMFhBYXlCWWVKY2JRdUNZNE1JTnZfM0hiQ3JhdnFHUmFuNDBuZV9SSEd3TGsyd1JidVVTZFIySC0tcHEwN05uMDZR?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data