

Informal Meeting of Environment / Climate Ministers

International climate negotiations

Session II

In December 2015, in Paris, the world witnessed a moment of unprecedented accord with the adoption of a new global legally binding climate instrument: the Paris Agreement. The Agreement aims to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by, inter alia:

- holding the increase in global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels;
- increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development, in a manner that does not threaten food production;
- making finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development.

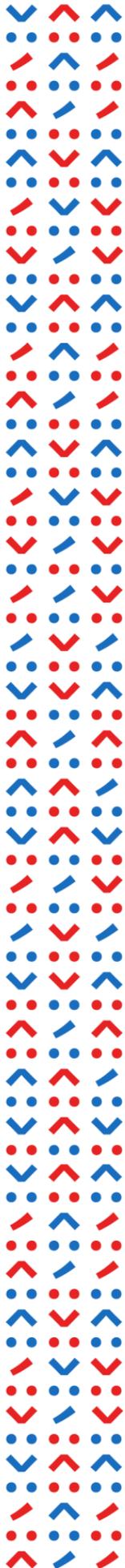
In order to achieve the long-term temperature goal, global greenhouse gas emissions have to peak as soon as possible, with the understanding that peaking will take longer for developing countries. Parties also have to undertake rapid reductions thereafter in accordance with best available science, through their nationally determined contributions (NDCs). From 2023, Parties will undertake a global stocktake every five years, based on the latest science and implementation to date, which will track progress and consider emission reductions, adaptation and support provided.

The Agreement will enter into force after ratification by at least 55 Parties to the Convention accounting in total for at least an estimated 55 per cent of the total global greenhouse gas emissions.

The Paris Agreement has been open for signature since 22 April 2016. During the signing ceremony, organised by the UN Secretary General, 175 countries confirmed their determination by signing the Agreement, and 18¹ of them have already submitted their instruments of ratification. Several other Parties, including the US, China and India, have also indicated their intention to ratify the Paris Agreement before the end of 2016.

The March 2016 European Council underlined the need for the European Union and its Member States to be able to ratify the Paris Agreement as soon as possible and on time so as to be Parties as of its entry into force.

¹ as of 21 June 2016, representing 0,20 % of the global greenhouse gas emissions



At the same time, the EU has been supportive of arrangements to ensure that all countries, even those that require additional time to ratify, can participate fully in the decisions that must be taken to make the Paris Agreement operational. Enabling the early implementation of the new climate regime requires the EU to take concerted action and increase its efforts to remain in the lead in further international negotiations.

On 10 June 2016, the European Commission submitted a proposal for a Council Decision on the conclusion on behalf of the European Union of the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

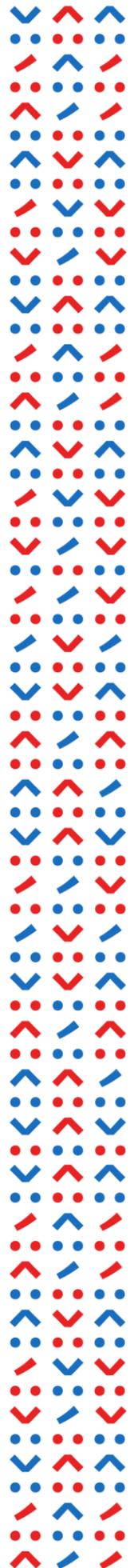
The Council (Environment) on 20 June 2016, in its statement on the ratification of the Paris Agreement, noted the growing international political momentum in favour of early entry into force of the Paris Agreement and also called for ratification of the Agreement by the European Union and its Member States as soon as possible. The Council also confirmed its commitment to the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 regulatory framework set out in the European Council conclusions of October 2014, including the binding EU 2030 climate target to reduce EU greenhouse gas emissions domestically by at least 40 % compared to their level in 1990.

On 6 March 2015, the European Union submitted its intended nationally determined contribution to the Paris Agreement, based on the 2030 Climate and Energy Policy Framework of October 2014². The Framework sets a binding target to reduce EU greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40 % domestically below 1990 levels by 2030. To achieve this target cost-effectively, the sectors covered by the EU emissions trading system (EU ETS) will have to reduce their emissions by 43 % compared to 2005 while non-ETS sectors will have to reduce their emissions by 30 % compared to 2005.

In May 2016, the meeting of the UNFCCC bodies in Bonn commenced the new phase in climate negotiations, focused on developing rules and guidance to operationalise the new Agreement. At its first meeting, the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement (APA) made initial steps in line with the work plan agreed at COP 21. With COP 22 in Marrakesh approaching, it also outlined the next steps for 2016, in particular in relation to NDCs and their features, as well as transparency, adaptation, the global stocktake, the compliance committee and the regular stocktakes on global progress. Parties were consulted on the issue of the Agreement's entry into force. Specific issues relevant to the implementation of the Paris Agreement were also addressed under the SBI and SBSTA agenda.

The Bonn negotiations marked an important and encouraging first step towards the implementation phase. However, there is no room for complacency as the months to come could still see some backtracking on the Paris spirit. The Marrakesh climate talks in November during the 22nd Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC need to further elaborate on the initial ideas and concepts, contribute to delivering the necessary decisions in a timely manner and show commitment to the balance of the

² http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/145397.pdf



Paris package, [particularly in terms of provision of accessible, transparent and increasing financial support to those most in need].

Ms El Haite, Morocco's Delegate Minister in Charge of the Environment, said: 'The solidarity and trust built in Paris must be indicators of the success in Marrakesh. COP 22 needs to be an action COP, launched on the work done in Bonn. It needs to strengthen tangible solutions and actions whilst maintaining the spirit of Paris.'

With many aims and different negotiating tracks running in parallel, it will be challenging to keep the focus on the issues crucial to further work on implementation: the global stocktake, transparency, adaptation, NDCs and supporting information, as well as finance.

Questions:

1. How can the challenge of early ratification be turned into an opportunity for truly global and early action to combat climate change?
2. How can the EU at COP22 foster transformative potential and accentuate the fundamental importance of INDCs? What expectations will developing countries have in this context and how can these best be managed?
3. How can the EU facilitate a common and constructive reading/understanding of the provisions in the Paris Agreement to prevent Parties going back to old positions and potentially delaying progress at COP 22? This can be of particular relevance for the discussions on the review of the Warsaw International Mechanism and on agenda items with a direct or indirect link to adaptation.
4. How can COP22 best formulate a roadmap for the facilitative dialogue in 2018 in order to take stock of the progress made to meet the long-term mitigation goal of the Paris Agreement, and set a positive example for future global stocktakes?