

CLIMATE CHANGE AND EUROPEAN FOREIGN POLICY AFTER COP21

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Given the universal and cross-cutting nature of the climate challenge, what priorities should shape foreign policy action on climate issues in the decade ahead? What should be the focus of European climate diplomacy? The European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI) and adelphi organized a meeting of senior experts and practitioners to review and build upon the outcomes of COP21. The discussions revealed important ideas for using European foreign policy tools to address climate mitigation, adaptation, and finance, for responding to climate-related security and migration risks and for improving EU climate diplomacy.

The Paris Agreement reached at the COP21 last December is a landmark climate agreement; the successful culmination of years of complex negotiations. Diplomats were able to break the long-standing divide between developed and developing countries by building a 'High Ambition Coalition'. The Paris Agreement is unique for its inclusiveness, its transparency requirements, and the fact that each country will own and be held accountable for their individual climate targets.

The agreement can also be seen as a success for the EU, notably the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS), who helped shape a common European position, and of the Member States themselves, who contributed resources and political commitment to the cause. European leadership, especially from France, was essential for determining what type of compromise deal might be possible, and then proposing and defending that deal. Over two weeks of negotiations last December, the prevailing mood in international climate talks swung from pessimism to optimism: there is now a solid framework in which to pursue effective decarbonisation of the world's economies over the coming decades.



EU Commission in Brussels

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But turning this framework into effective action on climate mitigation will require sustained effort in the years to come and the agreement itself does not cover all aspects of the climate challenge; the potential risks for fragility and instability arising from climate change will need to be addressed, while the future funding and implementation of climate adaptation remains highly uncertain.

Given the universal and cross-cutting nature of the climate challenge, what priorities should shape foreign policy action on climate issues in the decade ahead? What should be the focus of European climate diplomacy? How can climate issues be successfully integrated into development policy and security policy? As the European Union finalises its Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy, coherent long term thinking for how to minimise, manage and respond to climate risks will be needed.

Against this backdrop, the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI) and adelphi organized a meeting of senior experts and practitioners, including Laurence Tubiana, the French Presidential Envoy for COP21, to review and build upon the outcomes of COP21. The meeting was an opportunity to reflect on the role of climate change in European foreign policy, to contribute to the understanding of the development and stability risks of a changing climate, and to help shape appropriate responses. The discussions revealed important ideas for using European foreign policy tools to address climate mitigation, adaptation, and finance, for responding to climate-related security and migration risks, and for improving EU climate diplomacy.

Mitigation

The Paris process was centred on the creation of Intended National Determined Contributions (INDC), which offered every country their own platform to define how to meet the climate change challenge in the light of their specific national conditions. Ensuring credibility of these INDCs is a key issue for making the Paris Agreement a success and for ramping up future ambitions. The EU INDC, developed through continental negotiations nearly two years before the Paris deal, has widely been recognized as credible, as it is supported by domestic policies that are already being implemented. Building on this policy credibility, the EU could support a coalition for credibility and implementation that could further strengthen the role of the INDCs as the central pillars for shaping climate action around the world.

This support for nationally-led processes would help prevent the return of the firewall between developed and developing countries which long hindered progress in international climate negotiations. The central role of transparency and accountability in the Paris Agreement needs to be kept strong in order to build mutual trust for collective action.

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INDC

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This trust will be essential for encouraging countries to follow up on financial commitments – a necessary step to secure implementation.

In seeking leadership of a coalition for credibility and implementation, the EU can ensure the effectiveness of its influence on mitigation activities abroad by taking action in three key areas. First, the EU must continue to press forward by creating and implementing ambitious domestic climate policies that convey a credible commitment to climate objectives. Second, the EU must work closely with member states to cooperatively and cost-effectively facilitate green innovation and technological development. Leadership in affordable green technologies will be an increasingly important source of geopolitical power in a world anxious to cut out carbon without breaking the bank. And third, the EU and its member states can take the lead in meeting international commitments to mobilize climate finance.

Success in these three areas can smooth the path of European diplomats (and businesses and NGOs) in helping our international partners implement their INDCs. With effective coordination, this can lead to significant complementarity between the climate messaging of EU / Member State diplomats and the work of European development and trade actors; encouraging partner state climate ambition while helping them develop tools to pursue that mitigation. It is even possible that the EU can now demonstrate leadership by driving innovation policies globally, in addition to pursuing significant emission reductions in Europe. It is important to understand and to actively use this positive, opportunity-centred approach that connects climate action with innovation and economic progress.

Adaptation & finance

Adaptation to climate change involves the strengthening of resilience in states and societies facing climate impacts. As predictions of climate impacts for the decades ahead grow increasingly dire, additional investments in building capacities and resilience will be required. Unfortunately, less than 10% of tracked climate finance is estimated to flow towards climate adaptation, while the rest is dedicated to mitigation (with most of that going to renewable energy projects). This is partly a function of the nature of adaptation spending; few activities are only about adaptation, but also have other purposes and labels. Plus, as adaptation spending has largely been in public sector areas, private sector interest in financing it has been limited.

To this end, adaptation financing deserves special attention: to better measure flows and impacts, to develop better understanding of investment risks, and to incentivize spending on adaptation. Since resilience lacks a globally accepted unit to measure progress, it is difficult to measure cost effectiveness in parallel processes to strengthen capacities for resilience building. Increased research on resilience and better coordination on tracking climate flows can both

KEY AREAS FOR TAKING ACTION

1. CREATE AND IMPLEMENT AMBITIOUS DOMESTIC CLIMATE POLICIES

2. WORK CLOSELY WITH MEMBER STATES TO FACILITATE GREEN INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

3. TAKE THE LEAD IN MEETING INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS TO MOBILIZE CLIMATE FINANCE

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help with implementing the transparency provisions of the Paris Agreement.

Climate-sensitive infrastructure projects are expected to be a major focus of adaptation spending. Work by the European Investment Bank and others on such projects will provide a key entry point to build resilience and create economic and social co-benefits. One starting point could be to systematize the assessment of the potential impacts of climate change for each infrastructure project – integrated assessments that link climate change vulnerabilities with political, economic and social risks remain rare. This area will likely require targeted public investment to generate the necessary data that can help incentivize investment from other actors.

The EU can help address these challenges with its partners, including beyond the UNFCCC-framework. In 2015, climate adaptation was central not only to the Paris negotiations but also to the newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals and the updated framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) from Sendai. The EU will need to continue to think about how to work within these processes in a complementary manner, building alliances and partnerships that coordinate action across the various processes. Such alliances can be built bilaterally, regionally, through the G7 or G20, and in partnership with private sector initiatives with the EU taking on the role of a “lead mediator”, or leading mediator.

Security & migration

In the run up to the Paris negotiations, the relationship between climate change and fragility has gained increasing attention. Researchers have been studying the potential role of climate change as a stressor and threat multiplier in situations from Darfur to Syria. In response, the group of G7 foreign ministers have commissioned independent research on the issue and created a working group to further cooperative and integrated action. This working group is looking into the development of risk assessments and early warning systems as their first stream of action. Discussions on climate change, fragility, insecurity and migration can also be introduced into multilateral fora such as the G20 to encourage more inclusive and effective responses. Priority topics should be how political and security risk assessments can better incorporate climate risks; how to develop pilot projects that can illustrate the role of climate adaptation and resilience-building in supporting peace and stability. A key related question is how to incentivize private investment flows into funding resilience.

While from an EU perspective, the migration surge has triggered a steep political crisis, it may represent the ‘new normal’ in many regions of the world. Climate change pressures are expected to be linked to patterns of economic migration, with local resource pressures affecting livelihoods in many areas. With the Paris Agreement, there

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are now potential entry points for further activities, including with the Warsaw mechanism on loss and damage; outstanding related issues include the compensation liability discussion and the institutional arrangement for further action in the realm of climate and migration. It is, hence, crucial for the EU to look at migration policy responses in a comprehensive way, avoiding migrant labels (economic or environmental or insecurity) while understanding the links between climate and migration policy. There is a need for comprehensive and concrete responses throughout the migration cycle, including disaster risk reduction measures to prevent forced migration, facilitating planned migration away from degraded lands, and managing adaptation to allow people to stay, or return to, affected areas. While there is a necessary emphasis on water scarcity, and its impact on food security, livelihood security and migration, increased understanding of land vitality, land management and land rights should be central to analysis of the potential security and migration impacts of climate change.

Overall, improved action on the security-climate interface will require merging the climate discourse into crisis management policies to adequately respond to geopolitical impacts of climate change. It is no longer enough to work with Javier Solana's definition of climate change as a threat multiplier; instead, it is a geopolitical priority for the EU. The EU needs to look at the world with a deeper understanding of what climate change can mean in every single scenario, so as to prevent conflicts, strengthen alliances and create opportunities. What regions are most vulnerable to these risks? How will oil exporters manage the long-run reduction in global fossil fuel energy dependence? How will this affect the terms of reference of designing European foreign policy? Do we have the capacity to understand and plan for potentially disruptive scenarios that affect European interests? These and other questions will likely remain central to EU diplomatic discussions as the picture of climate impacts on peace and stability becomes increasingly clear.

No time to rest – how to ensure prolonged leadership of EU Climate Diplomacy?

The ability of the EU and its member states to forge common messages and speak with one voice, including through the Green Diplomacy Network, played a key role in making European climate diplomacy as success in the lead-up to COP21. They were able to mobilize diplomatic networks to broaden COP21 preparations, from technical negotiations to high-level political dialogue to public diplomacy efforts. The shared European message was strong, highly visible, and contributed to building a spirit of compromise across the entire UNFCCC process.

EU climate diplomacy can build on this significant political capital to make sure the foundations laid with the Paris Agreement turn into a true success story. This will require continued intensive and inclusive dialogue to maintain the momentum, help build capacities, and further

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EU CLIMATE DIPLOMACY

MOBILIZED DIPLOMATIC NETWORKS TO BROADEN COP21 PREPARATIONS, FROM TECHNICAL NEGOTIATIONS TO HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL DIALOGUE

the integration of climate change into development and energy policies. The Foreign Affairs Council of 15 February 2016 already indicated the importance of a proactive climate diplomacy agenda. The Council recognized the need for prolonged engagement, encouraged keeping climate change and implementation of the Paris Agreement as a strategic priority, and called for increased action to address the climate-security nexus.

It will be crucial for the EU to develop a concrete, comprehensive and ambitious climate diplomacy action plan for the post-COP21 era – building on the rather fuzzy list of activities mentioned thus far. Some important priorities for the plan should be to:

- 1. Build a strategic vision for implementation of the Paris Agreement.** Looking beyond the negotiations themselves, diplomats can help build and communicate a narrative on the benefits for each country to work towards the Agreement's objectives. No country is anxious to hobble its economic development in the pursuit of carbon emission reductions. Fortunately, through energy efficiency measures and increasingly affordable renewable energy options, most emissions reductions can already be done in ways that are beneficial to individual countries, e.g. by creating new jobs, improving the quality of life or increasing the competitiveness of the economy. It will be important to localize this message, pursuing proactive diplomacy supported by country-specific evidence of the benefits for each country. Every state has its own values and interests to balance as it measures costs, benefits, and distributional and other ethical considerations.
- 2. Provide support for developing countries to implement INDCs and decarbonize.** The Paris Agreement reflects the fact that national capacities vary greatly across the globe. Developing countries that may lack economic or governance capacities will require international support to shape and implement more ambitious climate policy. This should involve aggressive action in mobilizing and shaping climate finance, so that both private and public funds can find routes to climate-friendly projects. Another method of support is to build on past EU efforts to bring together climate leaders (who write and negotiate in Paris) with the national politicians and businesses that make the decisions on energy and infrastructure, facilitating the mainstreaming of climate issues into national agendas. Finally, helping Morocco to make the COP22 a success should be a European priority.
- 3. Identify and support ambitious alliances.** More emphasis needs to be placed on cooperating with different partners and expanding alliances – the importance of these connections became obvious while marshalling support for a successful deal in Paris. The G20 could be a central forum for this work, given its important role in global economic discussions and the

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1. BUILD A STRATEGIC VISION FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT

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participation of all the world's major emitters. The current Chinese presidency of the G20, and the upcoming German one, can be used to maintain the momentum of Paris. Beyond connections with other countries, there is also a need for better partnerships with the private sector, a key driver of innovation. These increased connections and alliances will be essential for finding how to better integrate climate-friendly action across other policy fields, such as trade, investment, and energy at local and national policy-making centres around the globe.

4. **Step up coordination among Member States.** Diplomatic synergies among European actors need to be exploited to achieve more with the same input. The Green Diplomacy Network has been pivotal for coordinating positions and sharing information, but this momentum is often lost at the embassy level. Momentum can be retained if delegations and embassies can more regularly share their information and planned activities. Joint European activities in partner countries can be used to both forge cooperation and share climate messages, with the combined strength of 28+1 delegations. The 2015 Climate Diplomacy Day was an effective example of this.
5. **Lead with strong domestic action.** Diplomatic messages can only resonate if they are credible. And for that, the EU and its member states will have to align their domestic policies with the long-term objectives of the Paris deal. This will enable diplomats to make the case more strongly that the type of action they are encouraging is feasible, affordable, and has proven co-benefits. Successful European examples can serve as models for action elsewhere. Increasingly, as other countries move forward with their climate activities, the EU will also be able to use these examples to inform its own domestic climate action.
6. **Further improve climate diplomacy capacities of delegations.** EU and member state delegations abroad can help facilitate implementation action by partner states, but require additional input and training, particularly as staff rotate so quickly through country delegations. They would also benefit from clear signals that they need to keep up the good work and intense networking on climate action. The regular provision of blueprints for possible activities, including briefing and discussion formats, are helpful for updating delegations and fostering delegation-to-delegation exchanges. In addition, a reporting blueprint to sensitize diplomats to climate impacts could help diplomats to interpret and communicate climate-related information better. Finally, improved integration of climate and environmental risks into the EU Conflict Early Warning System can provide diplomats with a more effective tool in their work.

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4. STEP UP COORDINATION AMONG MEMBER STATES

5. LEAD WITH STRONG DOMESTIC ACTION

6. FURTHER IMPROVE CLIMATE DIPLOMACY CAPACITIES OF DELEGATIONS

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