

COP24 - Global Climate Action high-level event intervention

EU intervention – speaking points for Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič

Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Dear High-Level Champions,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a real honour to be part of this High-Level Event.

It is so valuable to give proper recognition in this global forum to the ambition and vision of not only governments, but especially of those who act on the ground.

When I meet citizens, companies, cities across Europe, one question that keeps coming back is: how do my efforts fit within global action? How can I contribute?

Here at the COP, thanks to the Action Agenda, we can take pride and inspiration in everybody's actions, and see how the rich mosaic of action moves us closer towards cleaning up the world's economic development.

And we can hear what more we should do as policy-makers.

Hearing about the enthusiasm, but also about the barriers that still exist, allows us governments to measure our responsibilities.

The responsibility to give a framework and a clear sense of direction to the efforts of all. To create policies that are coherent rather than fight one another. To make climate, energy, finance, research and innovation, transport, trade all push in the same direction.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As European policy-makers, we embrace our responsibility.

This is why the European Commission presented last week our 2050 strategy for a climate-neutral Europe.

This document makes us the first major economy to seriously engage with the objective of climate neutrality.

It is not a top-down exercise of Europe imposing a vision on Europeans. It's a starting point for an in-depth debate that the European Commission will take around our continent.

Our strategy shows how every sector of the economy and every policy can be part of the transition. Equally importantly, it looks at the contribution of cities, regions, and each and every one of our citizens.

And it's not about creating prospects for some while leaving others behind. The 'just transition' is built into our strategy from the outset. It is clear about the sectors and regions that will need to transform, and looks into how to address their challenges.

This means empowering those that will be most affected, by investing into regional transformation strategies, into new skills for workers, into high quality local jobs.

The good news is that the opportunities outweigh the challenges, and that the challenges can be overcome with cooperation and solidarity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Cooperation and solidarity is also what the European Union brings to the Action Agenda on the global level.

We have been a strong supporter of the Agenda from the start, and are resolutely investing into cooperation across all priorities of the Marrakesh Partnership for both mitigation and adaptation.

The Global Climate Change Alliance +, The African Renewable Energy Initiative, the Global Fuel Economy Initiative, the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel, Mission Innovation are just some examples of initiatives where the EU has been at the core.

We are also a key partner of the Global Covenant of Mayors, the reference global initiative for cities, whose Board I have the privilege to co-Chair. We work closely with the Covenant to help cities around the world overcome the barriers they face to plan and finance ambitious action.

And we keep pushing the boundaries. Less than 3 months ago at the One Planet Summit, I presented ten new transformative initiatives.

And since then, this October, we set up an innovative partnership with Breakthrough Energy, an initiative that was born through the Action Agenda, to launch a 100 million euro clean energy investment fund.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have mentioned our comprehensive long-term strategy with social fairness at its core, and our initiatives to help scale up ambition and finance for all. These are our priorities as European policy-makers.

I am struck by how clearly they align with the priorities of cities, businesses, regions that we heard today.

I draw two conclusions.

One is a response to all the citizens who doubt if they have a role to play in the global transition. This COP will show clearly how everyone can and should act, for themselves as well as for the planet.

My other conclusion is a call to my fellow policy-makers around the globe. My experience has shown me the opportunities offered by climate neutrality. Let's work together with different stakeholders and among countries to take down the remaining barriers to ambitious action.

From our side, we Europeans will continue to strive for leadership and show solidarity.

Thank you very much.