



Submission by Croatia and the European Commission on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

Zagreb, 6 March 2020

Subject: Long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategy of the European Union and its Member States

The European Union (EU) and its Member States are fully committed to the Paris Agreement and its long-term goals, and call for urgently enhanced global ambition in light of the latest available science including the recent reports released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)¹. The EU urges all Parties to the Paris Agreement to communicate by 2020 their mid-century long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies to the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in accordance with the Article 4, paragraph 19 of the Paris Agreement.

On 12 December 2019 the European Council², taking note of the Communication of the European Commission on the European Green Deal³, endorsed **the objective of achieving a climate-neutral EU by 2050**, in line with the objectives of the Paris Agreement and in the light of the latest available science and of the need to step up global climate action⁴.

The endorsement of the climate neutrality objective was reached following an inclusive institutional and societal debate based on the **strategic long-term vision**⁵ proposed by the European Commission which includes a detailed analysis⁶ of solutions that could be pursued for the transition to a net zero greenhouse gas emissions economy and insights regarding the corresponding strategic priorities and an enabling framework that would allow reaching climate neutrality by 2050.

In accordance with Article 4.19 of the Paris Agreement, the EU Member States prepare their national long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies and submit them to the UNFCCC.

¹ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, (2019) "[Special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels](#)"; [Climate Change and Land: An IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems](#); [Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate](#); [2019 Refinement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories](#).

² The European Council consists of the heads of state or government of the EU Member States together with the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission.

³ [European Commission Communication \(COM\(2019\) 640\) 'The European Green Deal'](#)

⁴ The text of the European Council Conclusions of 12 December 2019 (EUCO 29/19) is in annex.

⁵ [European Commission Communication \(COM\(2018\)773\) 'A Clean Planet for all: A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy'](#)

⁶ [In-depth analysis in support of the Commission Communication \(COM\(2018\)773\)](#)

By agreeing and delivering on the ambitious social and economic transformation, the EU and its Member States aim to inspire global climate action and demonstrate that moving towards climate neutrality is not only imperative, but also feasible and desirable.

The EU and its Member States stand ready to engage with all Parties to ensure the timely delivery of robust and ambitious long-term low greenhouse emission development strategies in line with the objectives of the Paris Agreement. These strategies must reflect the need to step up collective ambition and provide the long-term policy guidance necessary to limit the intensifying impacts of climate change.

**EUROPEAN COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS – 12 DECEMBER 2019
CLIMATE CHANGE**

1. In the light of the latest available science and of the need to step up global climate action, the European Council endorses the objective of achieving a climate-neutral EU by 2050, in line with the objectives of the Paris Agreement. One Member State, at this stage, cannot commit to implement this objective as far as it is concerned, and the European Council will come back to this in June 2020.
2. The transition to climate neutrality will bring significant opportunities, such as potential for economic growth, for new business models and markets, for new jobs and technological development. Forward-looking research, development and innovation policies will have a key role.
3. Achieving climate neutrality will however require overcoming serious challenges. The European Council takes note of the Commission Communication on the European Green Deal and asks the Council to take work forward in line with paragraph 1. It recognises the need to put in place an enabling framework that benefits all Member States and encompasses adequate instruments, incentives, support and investments to ensure a cost-effective, just, as well as socially balanced and fair transition, taking into account different national circumstances in terms of starting points.
4. The transition will require significant public and private investments. In this context, the European Council welcomes and supports the announcement by the EIB that it intends to support EUR 1 trillion of investment in climate action and environmental sustainability in the period from 2021 to 2030. It underlines that the next MFF will significantly contribute to climate action. InvestEU has an important role in leveraging private investments for the transition. Tailored support for regions and sectors most affected by the transition will be made available from the forthcoming Just Transition Mechanism. The European Council welcomes the European Commission's announcement that its forthcoming proposals will aim at facilitating EUR 100 billion of investment through the Just Transition Mechanism. Funding of transformation efforts must continue after 2030.
5. All relevant EU legislation and policies need to be consistent with, and contribute to, the fulfilment of the climate neutrality objective while respecting a level playing field. The European Council invites the Commission to examine whether this requires an adjustment of the existing rules, including on state aid and public procurement. It also invites the Commission to report regularly on the environmental and socio-economic impact of the transition to climate neutrality.
6. The European Council acknowledges the need to ensure energy security and to respect the right of the Member States to decide on their energy mix and to choose the most appropriate technologies. Some Member States have indicated that they use nuclear energy as part of their national energy mix.

7. The climate neutrality objective needs to be achieved in a way that preserves the EU's competitiveness, including by developing effective measures to tackle carbon leakage in a WTO compatible way. In this context, the European Council takes note of the Commission's intention to propose a carbon border adjustment mechanism concerning carbon-intensive sectors. Facilities in third countries need to adhere to the highest international environmental and safety standards.
 8. The European Council invites the Commission to prepare a proposal for the EU's long-term strategy as early as possible in 2020 with a view to its adoption by the Council and its submission to the UNFCCC.
 9. The European Council warmly thanks Spain for the successful organisation of COP25 in Madrid. It invites the Commission, after a thorough impact assessment, to put forward its proposal for an update of the EU's nationally determined contribution (NDC) for 2030 in good time before COP26.
 10. International engagement will be crucial for the success in addressing climate change. The European Council calls on the Commission and the High Representative to pay particular attention to climate diplomacy.
 11. The European Council will keep progress towards the EU's objective of climate neutrality by 2050 under review and give strategic guidance, as appropriate.
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