

UN climate change conference in Katowice – questions and answers

1. What will happen at COP24?

This year's annual conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will be a crucial moment for the implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate change, as Parties are aiming to finalise a detailed set of rules and guidelines – the so-called Paris 'work programme' or 'rule book' – which will enable the landmark accord to be put into practice all around the world.

The conference, will take place from 2-14 December in Katowice, Poland, and will be presided over by the Government of Poland. It is officially the UNFCCC's 24th Conference of the Parties which is where it gets its name 'COP24' from; the Kyoto Protocol's 14th Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties (CMP 14) and the third part of the first session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 1.3).

The Paris Agreement, adopted in December 2015, sets out a global action plan to put the world on track to avoid dangerous climate change by limiting global warming to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature rise to 1.5°C. It entered into force on 4 November 2016. 195 UNFCCC Parties have signed the Agreement and 184 have now ratified it.

2. What are the EU's expectations for COP24?

In December 2015, Parties to the Paris Agreement agreed to finalise a detailed set of rules and guidelines – a 'work programme' or 'rulebook' – for implementing the accord by the end of 2018. Adopting a clear and comprehensive work programme consistent with what was agreed in Paris is necessary for putting the Agreement into practice. It will enable and encourage climate action at all levels worldwide and will demonstrate the global commitment to ambition.

Adopting a strong Paris work programme, with clear provisions on all key issues including transparency, finance, mitigation and adaptation, is the EU's top priority for COP24. The outcome must preserve the spirit of the Paris Agreement, be applicable to all Parties, take into account different national circumstances and reflect the highest possible ambition over time. Clear rules and guidelines will also serve Parties' own policy-making, by providing a robust underpinning for policies and reflection on enhancing ambition over time.

In the build-up to the conference, EU Climate Action and Energy Commissioner Miguel Arias Cañete has conducted extensive outreach with global counterparts in order to ensure a successful outcome in Katowice. This includes the second

Ministerial on Climate Action in Brussels co-hosted with counterparts from China and Canada, the Global Climate Action Summit in California, and a recent visit to Beijing where climate priorities were discussed with Chinese authorities. Additionally, the EU has also undertaken wide outreach at officials level with a view to moving towards landing zones on the key political issues related to the Paris rulebook. Party groupings reached out to include progressive developed and developing countries, the G77 and major economies including South Africa.

The political phase of the Talanoa dialogue should send a strong message to the world, in support of the implementation of the Paris Agreement to spur momentum for action. The EU expects all Parties to share evidence of their action and progress on their nationally determined contribution (NDC), as part of a collective global conversation on how to enhance ambition.

Ahead of COP24, the European Commission presented a strategic vision on how the EU could achieve climate neutrality – i.e. become a net zero emission economy – by 2050 (see point 4).

Alongside the formal negotiations, COP24 will have a strong focus on keeping up the political momentum for continued climate action by a wide range of stakeholders before 2020. It will provide a space for all relevant stakeholders to showcase their action, share information, foster new cooperation and raise awareness on climate change and the solutions available.

The EU has a rich [programme of side events](#) at COP24 – it will host more than 100 events over the two weeks, at the EU Pavilion in the conference centre.

3. What is the EU doing to reduce its own greenhouse gas emissions?

The EU's NDC for Paris is to reduce its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by at least 40% by 2030 compared to 1990. This target is part of a wider EU climate and energy framework for 2030 and builds on the 2020 target to cut emissions by 20%, which the EU is well on course to exceed.

The EU has worked intensely to establish an economy-wide framework of legislation and initiatives that will allow the bloc to meet its 2030 target and drive the transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient society. All key legislation for 2030 has already been adopted, including a modernisation of the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) and new energy efficiency and renewable energy targets to ensure the power sector and energy-intensive industries deliver the necessary emissions cuts, and new 2030 targets for all Member States to reduce emissions in non-ETS sectors including transport, buildings, agriculture and waste. New legislation will also ensure that emissions from land use and forestry will be balanced out by removals. Ambitious proposals to reduce EU road transport emissions are also on the table and still being negotiated by member states and the European Parliament. Fully implemented these measures could lead to an EU GHG emissions reduction of around 45% in 2030.

However, EU ambition and vision goes far beyond 2030. In March this year,

following a similar request from the European Parliament, EU leaders called on the Commission to present a proposal for a strategy for long-term EU GHG emissions reduction, in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Following broad stakeholder consultation and taking into account the [IPCC special report on global warming of 1.5°C](#), the Commission this week presented a [strategic vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral EU economy in 2050](#). It is an ambitious vision in line with the Paris Agreement goals providing sustainable growth and jobs and improving the quality of life of all EU citizens.

The strategic vision will be followed by a broad debate among EU decision-makers and all stakeholders, which should allow the EU to adopt a long-term strategy and submit it to the UNFCCC by 2020, as requested under the Paris Agreement. The Commission will present its strategic vision to all global partners at COP24, hoping it can inspire others to prepare their own long-term strategies.

4. How does the Paris Agreement ensure countries deliver on their commitments?

In 2015, countries agreed to set up an enhanced transparency framework for action and support to build mutual trust and confidence and to promote effective implementation of the Paris commitments. The key task is to make this framework a reality by adopting a strong set of detailed rules.

The enhanced transparency framework will help not only the understanding of progress made individually by Parties in the implementation of their nationally determined contributions, but is also critical for providing robust data to support the global stocktakes and assess the progress towards the long-term goals.

Solid multilateral transparency and accountability guidelines would help countries to design good policies at home. They should provide an incentive to build and maintain domestic institutions, data collection and tracking systems that policymakers need to make the right decisions.

The transparency, accountability and compliance system under the Paris Agreement is not punitive, but it is meant to identify when Parties are off track and help them to get back on track if they are not delivering. Underpinning this system are new and comprehensive requirements and procedures applicable to all Parties to track and facilitate their performance. These include technical expert reviews, a multilateral peer review process, and a standing committee on implementation and compliance. Together, these will maintain a focus on both technical and political aspects of performance.

5. What does the Paris Agreement mean for the EU's contribution to climate finance for developing countries before 2020?

At the UN climate conference in Copenhagen in 2009, developed countries collectively committed to contribute USD 100 billion of climate finance per

year by 2020, from both public and private sources, for meaningful mitigation action and transparency of implementation. In Paris in 2015, the EU and other developed countries committed to continue to provide financial resources to help developing countries tackle climate change.

Together, the EU, its Member States and the European Investment Bank are the biggest donor of climate finance to developing countries. We have progressively raised our contribution in recent years, providing EUR 20.4 billion in 2017 alone. The EU is delivering its fair share of the overall USD 100 billion commitment.

The Paris Agreement called for a “concrete roadmap” to achieve the USD 100 billion goal, with a Climate Finance Roadmap prepared by the donor community in 2016 indicating that they are on track to meet the ambitious goal.

6. How does the Paris Agreement address adaptation and loss and damage associated with the impacts of climate change?

The Paris Agreement put adaptation on an equal footing with mitigation and established the first global goal on adaptation, namely to enhance adaptive capacity, strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change. The global stocktake will review the overall progress towards this goal. Adaptation is a key element of EU policy and planning. National, regional and local adaptation strategies are gaining ground since the adoption of the EU Adaptation Strategy in 2013. Today, 25 Member States have a strategy or plan and over 1,500 cities and municipalities have committed to developing one, in the framework of the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy.

The Commission published an [evaluation of the Adaptation Strategy](#) earlier this month – highlighting successes achieved and actions needed to further reduce Europe’s vulnerability to climate impacts. The evaluation also concluded that adapting EU regions and economic sectors to the impacts of climate change is now more urgent than forecast when the strategy was adopted in 2013.

In addition, the EU is highly committed to supporting partner countries to take climate action, including adaptation efforts. The percentage of EU climate finance targeted at adaptation is increasing, with particular focus on action in the most vulnerable countries. In 2017, roughly 50% of climate finance from the EU budget (excludes Member State funds) was dedicated to adaptation projects. The Paris Agreement recognises the importance of averting, minimising and addressing loss and damage associated with climate change, including extreme weather events, such as floods, landslides, storms and forest fires, and slow onset events such as the loss of fresh water aquifers and glaciers.

These concerns were addressed when the Paris Agreement was adopted by giving the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage the role of promoting cooperation on these issues. This includes further work on emergency response and insurance issues and a task force to develop recommendations on approaches to address displacement due to climate change, which delivered comprehensive recommendations on the subject.

7. What is the role for business and other non-state actors and how can the Global Climate Action Agenda be strengthened?

The Paris Agreement recognises the key role of businesses, local governments, cities and other organisations in the transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient world. The private sector will ultimately need to bring about the economic transformation, turning challenges into business opportunities. The sharing of experience from the private sector side, on the conditions to achieve sustainability in practice, is therefore extremely valuable.

Actions showcased through the Global Climate Action Agenda (GCAA) – also known as the Marrakesh Partnership on Global Climate Action – are helping to build on the growing momentum. The GCAA has the potential to deliver transformative impacts on the ground, enhance ambition pre-2020 and contribute to implementing national climate plans and the long-term Paris goals.

While measuring the impact and identifying what is additional to national climate pledges remains difficult, data indicates that the aggregated impact of the initiatives is in the order of a few gigatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (GtCO₂e) in 2030 beyond the current NDCs – a potentially significant contribution to closing the gap (UNEP Gap Report 2016).

The EU and its Member States have been proactive in promoting and sponsoring specific GCAA initiatives. Flagship initiatives include the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy and Mission Innovation.

The high-level events on global climate action and the thematic days at COP24 will be excellent opportunities to reflect on progress made under existing initiatives, as well as for announcements on new transformative initiatives.

More information:

[COP24 webpage](#)

[Paris Agreement](#)

[Strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy by 2050 – A Clean Planet for all](#)

[European Political Strategy Centre study “10 Trends reshaping Climate and Energy”](#)

The EU delegation will hold regular press briefings during COP24, which will be [streamed live and ‘on demand’](#).

[\[1\]](#) The UNFCCC currently has 197 Parties, including the European Union and all 28 EU Member States

Conférence des Nations unies sur les changements climatiques à Katowice – questions et réponses

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UN-Klimakonferenz in Kattowitz – Fragen und Antworten

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[ESMA registers A.M. Best \(EU\) Rating Services B.V. as credit rating agency](#)

The registration takes effect from today 3 December 2018. A.M. Best (EU) Rating Services B.V. is based in the Netherlands and intends to issue corporate ratings for insurance undertakings and corporate issuers that are not considered a financial institution or an insurance undertaking.

The CRA Regulation seeks to ensure that credit ratings issued in the EU meet minimum standards of quality, transparency and independence by providing that only companies registered by ESMA as CRAs may lawfully issue credit ratings which can be used for regulatory purposes by credit institutions, investment firms, insurance and reinsurance undertakings, institutions for occupational retirement provision, management companies, investment companies, alternative investment fund managers and central counterparties.

In order to be registered as a CRA, a company must be able to demonstrate to ESMA that it complies with the requirements of the CRA Regulation, which covers inter alia:

- the governance of CRAs and the management of conflicts of interest;
- the development and application of methodologies for assessing credit risk; and

- the disclosure of information to ESMA and to market participants.

Once registered, CRAs are subject to on-going monitoring and supervision by ESMA to ensure that they continue to meet the conditions for registration. ESMA will impose sanctions and/or penalties where it finds that a CRA has failed to meet its obligations under the CRA Regulation.

The total number of CRAs registered in the EU is 27 CRAs. Amongst the [27 registered CRAs](#), three operate under a group structure, totalling 17 legal entities in the EU, which means that the total number of CRA entities registered in the EU is 41.

Some improvements in the lives of people with disabilities but disadvantage remains

There has been an overall improvement in the employment and social situation of people with disabilities in the EU with increased employment rates and greater levels of participation in society. But they still remain among the most disadvantaged groups in Europe, with a higher risk of mental health issues, and a lower tertiary education completion rate.

The new policy brief on the social and employment situation of people with disabilities uses data from the 2011 and 2016 European Quality of Life Surveys to assess changes in key issues such as employment, education and training, participation in society, social protection and healthcare. It shows that the employment rates for people with disabilities increased from 41% to 50% between 2011 and 2016. This growth in employment was greater than the non-disabled population which grew from 66% to 70% during the same period.

There has also been some improvement in the area of social inclusion, with fewer people with disabilities reporting feeling left out of society in 2016 than in 2011. This is reflected in the fact that more people with disabilities are participating in social activities than previously. In fact, there is no longer a gap in social participation rates between people with and without disabilities. Despite this, mental well-being remains a concern, as the risk of depression for people with disabilities is significantly larger than it is for the rest of the population: 46% of people with disabilities are at risk compared to 16% of their non-disabled counterparts.

The policy brief also highlights that there has been regression in the area of tertiary education. In 2016, people with disabilities lagged further behind their non-disabled counterparts in completion rates for tertiary education than in 2011. This finding is particularly concerning considering

that the employment gap for disabled people with a tertiary degree is significantly smaller than it is for those with lower educational attainment. People with disabilities with a lower level of education find themselves at a particular disadvantage: just 26% of people with disabilities who completed primary education have a job; this figure rises to 46% for those with secondary education and 72% for those who completed tertiary education.

The overall improvements in the employment and social situation of people with disabilities are positive, particularly in relation to people in work and social participation. However, significant work remains in order to address the gaps in employment and quality of life between people with and without disabilities. Concerted effort is needed, most notably in the areas of access to tertiary education, provision of mental-health services, and boosting the employment opportunities for disabled people with lower educational levels, in order to move to a situation where having a disability is no longer a determining factor of quality of life in Europe.