

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change: Save the climate now!

Greens/EFA press briefing,
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Background

Global mean warming has now reached 1°C above preindustrial for the first time. It is a signal from the climate system that time is running out if we are to be able to reduce emissions fast enough to be in line with the Paris Agreement. The only acceptable target is to limit the temperature rise at 1.5°C. The new special climate scientific report on how the world can limit global warming to 1.5°C was indeed requested by the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) in Paris at the COP21 (Conference of Parties). **It will be made public on Monday 8th October in South Korea at 10 am (3 pm our time)**. The report will touch upon quite some sensitive subjects (feasibilities, technologies, 'behavioural change'...). As such, its reach and importance will be greater than the previous ones and its impact on the negotiation process (be it at global, regional or domestic levels) could be big.

Note that an EU Environment Council is scheduled for the day after, during which the IPCC (UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, IPCC) report will be discussed, which is an important moment towards determining the EU's contribution to the COP24 in Katowice.

Why is this new IPCC report of crucial importance?

- The 1.5 target was a major achievement on ambition at the COP21, where it became the new target threshold thanks to the effort of vulnerable parties.
- Key for the negotiation process, the so-called Talanoa dialogue, within which countries are asked to raise their effort at national level (NDC - Nationally determined contribution), by 2020. And also key for the internal EU debate on ratcheting-up their own national plans.
- The next major IPCC Assessment Report in full (AR6, Assessment Report) is due in 2022, but will be too late in the negotiation process to push for a significant increase of emission reduction.
- Good news: the report shows deeper emission reductions are possible but strong political will and courage are needed.

What is it about?

- **No part of the world is untouched by climate change:** Climate change impacts are already affecting us all, from increasing death rates linked to heatwaves or air pollution, to coral bleaching and rising extreme weather impacts that are buffeting communities the world over, including the EU as we have seen very clearly last summer.
- **Science has moved on very rapidly since AR5** (fifth Assessment Report). This effort has allowed the IPCC - for the first time - to create a picture of what radical whole-system transformation might look like. **The report now shows more clearly than ever the differences in impact between 1.5 and 2°C, including in the EU.** There are clear differences between the two targets when it comes to issues such as health impact, loss of ecosystems and biodiversity, loss of arctic ice and long-term sea level rise, extreme weather events, fresh water availability, crop yields, risk of conflicts and displacement of people, etc.
- **All effort count and every fraction of degree matters.** 1.5°C is really the difference between life and death for many (Small islands states such as Tuvalu, Kiribati).
- The negative economic impacts of climate change will fall disproportionately on the world's poorest countries, but **the economic burden will be less imbalanced if warming is limited to 1.5°C.** By 2100, the world could be three per cent wealthier than in a 2°C warmer climate. National economies could save as much as US\$30trillion in cumulative benefits between now and the end of the century. Tackling climate change has many co-benefits, from clean air to economic development.
- **Regarding employment, fossil fuels provide fewer jobs than low-carbon technologies. Shifting to clean energy on the scale necessary to deliver a 1.5°C world could create significant employment opportunities.** Jobs in clean energy are also higher quality, and generally safer and more skilled. Policies to deliver a 1.5°C world could see 68% more green jobs (in maintenance, manufacturing, construction, and installation of clean energy) by 2030. A global green economy will mean less jobs in carbon intensive industries, but more jobs overall. Limiting climate change could see 6 million jobs lost from carbon intensive industries by 2030, but 24 million added in new industries, a net increase of 18 million jobs in sectors including clean energy, electric vehicles, and sustainable building.
- **For the EU and other developed countries, staying below 1.5°C implies net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050, and net zero CO₂-emissions well before 2050.** This can only be achieved with stringent climate policies and an immediate ramping up of the efforts. Planning the transition carefully and enacting it deliberately will give the best conditions for future economic prosperity.

What do the Greens/EFA want?

- **The world's governments must now use this report they commissioned in Paris to step up their climate action commitments in 2018.** Current country commitments are currently set to deliver temperature rises of well above 2°C.
- **Reaching 1.5°C is still possible, but the chances of doing so are shrinking rapidly. Urgent and robust action across all sectors is now essential.** We need a very rapid transition to a 100% renewables energy system, a fast phase-out of the use of fossil fuels, and decisive action to reduce emissions from land use, land use change and forestry, while increasing the capacity of our forests, wetlands, grasslands and farmlands to remove carbon from the atmosphere. These no-regrets actions will make all our lives better. Every year we delay, climate change impacts get worse and more expensive to deal with, as well as making the solutions more expensive to deploy.
- **The EU has so to set the right example and ensure that its climate objectives for 2030 are Paris compliant.** The COP24 in Katowice is the moment for the EU to align its NDC to the objectives of the Paris Agreement. The EU environment ministers have to deliver. **Europe must also adopt an ambitious decarbonisation strategy for 2050** that will include at least one pathway to net zero GHG emissions by 2050, and be the blueprint to bring all EU sectoral legislation in line with the Paris Agreement.