LOCAL AUTHORITIES, BUSINESSES, CIVIL SOCIETY AND TRADE UNIONS CALL FOR EU CLIMATE LEADERSHIP

Ahead of March Council meetings, European stakeholders ask decision-makers to live up to their Paris commitments

Brussels, 2 March 2016 - Climate Alliance co-signed a statement which a major coalition of businesses, cities, regions, investors, trade unions and civil society groups sent today to European Environment Ministers and Heads of State and Government. This so-called “Coalition for Higher Ambition” asks the EU leaders to set the course for a successful implementation of the Paris Agreement in their upcoming meetings.

After the enthusiasm of the 21st Conference of the Parties and the adoption of the first ever global legally binding agreement for international climate action post 2020, the upcoming months are crucial. The coalition therefore calls on EU leaders to show that the bloc is ready to implement tangible policies to achieve the goal of keeping global temperature rise “well below 2°C”.

When deciding the EU’s contribution to the Paris talks in October 2014, EU leaders reserved the possibility to review the targets depending on the Paris outcome. And the broad range of actors of the Coalition for Higher Ambition is now taking them at their word.

The statement highlights: “2016 is a critical year for the implementation of the Paris Agreement as well as the Sustainable Development Goals through the development of EU legislation that will bring the EU’s 2030 climate and energy package to life. There is a real risk that the level of ambition of legislation currently on the table is going to damage Europe’s chances of reaching the goals of the Paris Agreement. Europe’s 2030 legislative agenda risks locking-in lower ambition.”

This is why the coalition urges decision-makers to ensure that the EU’s greenhouse gas emission targets for 2030 are designed to reach a reduction at the upper end of the 80-95% range by 2050, and to gear all EU legislation currently under review to this aim.

“The adjustment of the EU climate and energy targets and policies is crucial to set a clear and reliable framework for all stakeholders to drive ambitious climate action”, comments Tine Heyse, Deputy Mayor of the City of Gent (BE), and President of Climate Alliance. “Climate Alliance member cities
have long before the Paris summit voted a resolution supporting higher EU targets for greenhouse gas emissions reduction, renewable energy and energy efficiency. These should now be taken up in light of the Paris Agreement”, Heyse continues.

The statement of the Coalition for Higher Ambition also calls on EU leaders to closely work with non-state actors like cities, regions, businesses and civil society organisations who have demonstrated that they are ready to play their part in supporting the objectives of the climate agreement.

“As an Ambassador for Climate Alliance in Paris, I felt what great hopes lay on the agreement and local governments. Cities have shown their commitment to reach climate goals before and during COP21. Now it is up to European leaders to create a framework – in cooperation with us – that makes our work easier and brings all actors together to turn the Paris Agreement into reality”, states Boris Palmer, Lord Mayor of Tübingen (DE) and Climate Alliance ambassador at COP21.

Statement of the Coalition for Higher Ambition

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ABOUT Climate Alliance

For more than 25 years, Climate Alliance member municipalities have been acting in partnership with indigenous rainforest peoples for the benefit of the global climate. With over 1,700 members spread across 26 European countries, Climate Alliance is the world’s largest city network dedicated to climate action and the only one to set tangible targets: each member city, town and district has committed itself to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 10 percent every 5 years. Recognising the impact our lifestyles can have on the world’s most vulnerable people and places, Climate Alliance pairs local action with global responsibility. The network fosters cooperation with indigenous peoples, runs awareness raising campaigns and develops tools for climate action planning. It provides ample opportunity for participation and exchange while representing member interests at the national, European and international levels.