European business, local authorities and NGOs urge EU leaders to step up climate action

Today a unique gathering of businesses, investor groups, local and regional authorities, and civil society groups, standing together as the Coalition for Higher Ambition, are calling upon EU leaders to accelerate the transition to a zero-carbon Europe and thus limit climate impacts and allow for improvements to public health, greater competitiveness for businesses, and an increase in good quality jobs.

The Coalition believes that the current EU climate commitments need to be raised in order to keep the Paris Agreement goals within reach. The stakeholders urge EU leaders to:

- Ensure the finalisation of the EU's energy legislation for 2030 in line with the ambition levels adopted by the European Parliament.
- Ensure that the new EU long-term climate strategy sets Europe on a pathway that delivers on the 1.5°C objective of the Paris Agreement, which must include a net-zero emissions target by 2050 at the latest.
- Ensure a timely revision of the 2030 greenhouse gas emissions reduction target so as to allow the EU to resubmit its Paris pledge to the UN by 2020, as agreed in Paris.

The statement comes prior to the High-Level EU Talanoa Dialogue where key decision makers and stakeholders will be discussing ways to step up climate action; and the final round of negotiations on the EU’s energy legislation for 2030, both taking place on 13 June.

Wendel Trio, Director of Climate Action Network Europe said:

„Together we believe that the full implementation of the Paris Agreement means much deeper emission cuts than currently planned. Europe must embark on a pathway that delivers on the 1.5°C objective of the Paris Agreement. This means adopting the Parliament’s position on the future energy legislation, but also much more than that: considerably increasing the target for reducing carbon emissions by 2030 and cutting emissions to net zero by 2050 at the latest."

Eliot Whittington, Director of The Prince of Wales’s Corporate Leaders Group said:

“The future of Europe needs to see business and governments working together to deliver a prosperous, resilient, zero carbon economy and to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement. More and more businesses are showing how innovative business thinking can reimagine the way we do things and make zero carbon not only possible, but good for people and good for business. But they need policy makers to set the direction and make policy frameworks fit for purpose.”

Peter Damgaard Jensen, CEO of Danish pension fund PKA and Chair of the Institutional Investors Group on Climate Change said:

“While investors strongly welcomed the historic achievement of the Paris Agreement, it is vital that governments now step up their ambition in order to fully implement it. In the EU, clear, long-term and ambitious policies which are designed to accelerate private sector investment into the low carbon transition can support large-scale deployment of capital, promoting sustainable economic growth and boosting job creation while also cementing the EU’s position as a global leader on climate action.”

Tine Heyse, President of Climate Alliance and Mayor for Environment, Climate, Energy and North-South, City of Ghent, Belgium said:
“The action of national governments must further enable local leadership on the clean energy transition. Local authorities across Europe and globally are taking bold action to tackle climate change, with many acting faster and going further than their national level counterparts. Europe's leaders must be unwavering in delivering on the Paris Agreement targets while ensuring that all levels of government are well-equipped to play their part.”

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Notes:


[2] The informal Coalition for Higher Ambition is an unprecedented gathering of stakeholders established in 2016 to call upon EU leaders to act on the Paris Agreement and ensure that EU climate policies are coherent with its goals. It published two statements in early 2016: on aligning EU policy with the Paris Agreement and on the Paris Agreement ratification.


Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe is Europe's leading NGO coalition fighting dangerous climate change. With over 150 member organisations from 35 European countries, representing over 1.700 NGOs and more than 40 million citizens, CAN Europe promotes sustainable climate, energy and development policies throughout Europe.

The Prince of Wales's Corporate Leaders Group (CLG) brings together European business leaders to accelerate progress towards a low carbon, sustainable economy.

The Institutional Investors Group on Climate Change (IIGCC) provides investors with a collaborative platform to encourage public policies, investment practices, and corporate behaviour that address long-term risks and opportunities associated with climate change.

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 some 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.