

Post Copenhagen: Practical Consequences for Europe

Briefing Session for Parliamentarians and Policy Makers

Summary and objectives

The event will consider the practical consequences of the Copenhagen outcome and the ongoing international politics of climate change from an EU perspective. It will focus on the EU's role as an actor in the global process whilst taking into consideration the implications of recent changes within EU policy processes and policy evolution in other areas of external relations policy. Specific objectives include:

- Brief review of what came out of Copenhagen, status update on events in early 2010 and a look forward to the process through to COP16 in Mexico, with a focus on the politics of the process and the different options for moving ahead
- Understand the potential role that the EU can play in moving the process forward and whether/how its role needs to change given recent external and internal changes in policy processes
- Identify the practical implications for EU external relations policy, particularly in relation to development cooperation processes

Background

The Copenhagen climate change conference (COP15) was supposed to be the final milestone in negotiating a new international agreement on climate change. In practice, the conference achieved much less than most people hoped, simply 'taking note' of an Accord between a subset of parties, which has uncertain legal status. At the start of 2010 there is still little clarity about how the UNFCCC process will need to proceed in 2010 and how the ever evolving global politics of climate change will influence what can be achieved through the international process.

The EU is responsible for around 15% of global greenhouse gas emissions. It has traditionally played an important role in pushing a relatively ambitious agenda of actions to address climate change, both in the international post-2012 negotiations and in terms of pioneering instruments such as the EU emissions trading scheme. But, looking forwards, there have also been calls for the EU to reconsider how it engages with the international process in the lead up to COP16 in Mexico, in light of political shifts occurring between the main negotiating blocs.

Recent internal changes within the EU also need to be considered in planning the way forward for Europe. The Lisbon Treaty could provide opportunities for enhancing engagement, for example, between the Commission and the main negotiating tracks under the UNFCCC. It could also provide a more practical means for promoting policy coherence between actions on climate change and other policy areas which are crucial in finding practical approaches to addressing climate change.

At the start of a new decade, the international climate process, the EU and the world are all at different cross-roads. Movement by the EU in any direction could have profound consequences for its success in dealing with climate change and other global challenges. This event will explore the options for the EU in future international climate action and the practical options for moving forward.

Core propositions

- The press say Europe was humiliated in Copenhagen. Is this true? If so, why?
- Is there a realistic chance of reaching 20% emissions reductions, never mind 30%? Should Europe commit to 30% emissions reductions anyway?
- Is there a 'new world order' apparent in the climate negotiations? If so, does this mean that Europe has to completely re-think how it engages with the world on the issue?

- How should Europe commit to fast start finance for climate change mitigation and adaptation?
- Why has progress with the EU's GCCA and GEREEF financing initiatives been so slow?
- The Lisbon Treaty offers new opportunities for Europe to strengthen its influence on international climate policy. Is this true? If so, why?

Programme and speakers

12:30-13:30 - Registration and coffee
13:30-14:30 Opening Chair: Johan van de Gronden , Director WWF Netherlands
13:30-13:35 – Opening remarks: Jos van Gennip , president SID Netherlands and the European Prog., former Senator in the Dutch Senate
13:35-14:00 – Key-note speech (25 min) by: Yvo de Boer , Executive Secretary, UNFCCC - " Moving forward from Copenhagen: avenues for cooperation and action "
14:00-14:30 – Open discussion with the participants
14:30 -16.45 – Multi-stakeholder panel and discussion Chair: Johan van de Gronden , Director WWF Netherlands
14:30 – 15:30 Presentations by panellists : (i) Noriko Fujiware , Head of Climate Change and Research Fellow, Centre for European Policy Studies CEPS – " Understanding the role of the EU in future climate negotiations and options for strengthened engagement with developing countries " (ii) Walter Kennes , Head of Environment Sector in Unit "Sustainable management of natural resources", Directorate-General for Development, European Commission – " The implications of recent external and internal policy developments on DG Development climate change activities " (iii) H.E Ambassador Audrey Joy Grant , Head of Mission of Belize to the EC – " Where has Copenhagen left developing countries and what role can the EU play in enhancing future engagement? " (iv) Jean-Christophe Hoste , Research Fellow, EGMONT Institute, Belgium – " Understanding the political economy of the African Group in the run up to Copenhagen and implications for the future " (v) Asuncion Lera St. Clair , Professor, University of Bergen, Norway – " Taking stock of the climate change and development agenda: Perspectives on poverty, equity and human security in international processes after Copenhagen ".
15:30 – 16:45 Open discussion with the participants
16:45 -17.00 – Main conclusions and closing by Leo Peskett , Research Fellow, Overseas Development Institute & EDC 2020 Coordinator WG on Climate Change
17:00 Coffee and Refreshments