

Presentation by TONY LONG, EPO Director

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Will the EU lead the way to Poznan – An EU Climate package for the planet?

We are now in last days and hours of negotiations for an EU climate deal.

WWF – and the entire NGO community – will assess the EU climate deal in the context of the emerging global processes and international solutions emerging at UN level for the planet's climate crisis.

This is not just the 'next bit of EU environmental law'. The results here will have major ramifications in the negotiations in Poznan, which are now underway.

In Poznan the EU energy/climate package is THE 'talk of the town'. The world is watching very closely what the EU is preparing as the first large block of countries globally stating their binding 2020 commitments and policies on climate change.

WWF and other NGOs strongly welcomed Parliament's Committee votes in October to strengthen the climate package. But since then, in the closed door trialogue negotiations, the Council has hardly moved towards Parliament's robust positions. Indeed, in these last days, the Council negotiations with Parliament look like a race to the bottom.

The EU block has until now has taken on something of a mantle for being a leader for the rest of the world in pushing for serious climate action.

It is deeply ironic that just at a time when the rest of the world is waking up – including the US and China and several major developing countries moving in directions towards strong targets and climate actions – the EU's leadership is being called into question. The talk led by some rather public and recalcitrant Member States (and others no doubt hiding behind them) is now all competitiveness, protectionism, carbon leakage and any other loopholes to avoid meeting our responsibilities. What more stupid a time could there be for EU timidity?

There are still major issues on the table for today's Environment Council and next week's European Council meetings. This is the time we rely on YOU - the Parliament - to fight for a minimum credible position from the EU in these last days.

For the international community watching us from Poznan, there are THREE PRIORITIES to assess the effectiveness of the EU package:

- 1) On emission reductions: The EU WILL commit to moving from 20% to a 30% reduction of EU emissions AUTOMATICALLY after a new international agreement. If this is not

automatic, then the EU effectively only offers a 20% reduction to the rest of the world – below the recommended minimum adopted by the EU in Bali last year.

2) The EU WILL commit to making MOST of these reductions inside Europe – not relying on buying often doubtful overseas credits to replace reductions for Europe.

3) On solidarity with developing countries – for G77 and China: the EU WILL finally make a binding commitment to provide finance and technology transfer to these countries to help them adapt to impacts of climate change and to transit to sustainable, cleaner energy systems for the future.

AND there are other key priorities in its Climate and Energy Package which will be closely watched:

4). The EU WILL regulate its own targets – and give itself a valid compliance mechanism guaranteeing fulfilment of Member State reductions targets and setting an example for other countries.

5) The EU WILL confront the major culprit of its climate pollution, - the power sector. And the EU WILL set a limit on how much a coal fired station can pollute.

6) The EU WILL have a real transformation of our energy market – delivering 20% renewables consumption by 2020 (without loopholes such as a review clause, or planned projects counting towards the target) and developing the technology to prove that renewables work on a massive scale, in both developed and developing countries.

I am sorry I cannot add a seventh. Because on cars and CO₂ we had a final deal this week – a disappointingly weak one which allows car manufacturers in fact to emit MORE CO₂ in 2012 than they do now. There is one other region where the car industry has been even more successful in fending off fuel efficiency legislation...and there is one region where the car industry is in terminal decline. That region is the United States. Europe's car industry this week did not just deal a blow to the environment and citizens, but also to its own future.

The Council and Parliament need to deliver on these points in their final deal – or the EU package will dash all the expectations that have been raised.

If this minimum cannot be achieved, then WWF - and possibly other European NGOs - will have no choice but to denounce the EU deal as a failure to the international community – and to look elsewhere for future leadership on climate actions.

In conclusion, this is not a hollow or empty warning. The reason WWF will walk away from the EU position is because there will have been a breaking of commitments and even worse, a possible deliberate deception. The commitments made previously by the EU on climate change

include those made at Bali, where the EU subscribed to a 25-40% reduction target and to elaborating a financial mechanism to help developing countries. Commitments were made at the European Council in 2007 where there was the unequivocal promise of a 30% reduction in case of a satisfactory agreement. 30% is 30%.

But it is not just Europe's international credibility which is at stake. There are even other greater costs for the EU's future.

Promises made in Europe's name by our political leaders must look as if they are low-cost, low risk options. Who holds Heads of State and Government accountable for these pledges in dreary Brussels summits or distant capital cities hosting summits? Well Europe's citizens know about these broken promises. These are educated voters. If we care for the experiment that is Europe, we must care that the institutions do not feed a cynicism about the whole EU project.

If we care about the values that Europe is projecting to the world, if we care about what politicians are saying in our name, if we care enough about Europe to want it to grow and mature, then our politicians have to deliver more than fine words and rhetoric.

As ever, we look to the Parliament to fight this fight and hold true to the strong climate actions that we were promised.

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