

Understanding the EU's 2030 Climate Pledge

What the new announcement includes:

See the open letter from EU Commission to UNSG, Ban-Ki Moon:
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/145470.pdf

- EU will reduce emissions by at least 40% on 1990 levels in 2030
 - Says it is by 'domestic measures alone'
 - The council will agree next year if the EU 'should pledge' this under international negotiations
- Includes a renewable energy target of 27%
 - This is inline with 'business as usual' growth in the RE sector¹
- Energy efficiency
 - Will be considered later this year by the Commission
- Reform of the ETS
 - Reform of the ETS is delayed until 2021 when a market stability reserve will come into effect.

It builds on a weak BAU pledge for 2020

The current Kyoto Protocol commitment of the EU for a 20% reduction on 1990 levels by 2020 is undermined by statistics from its own environmental protection agency which show that in 2012 it had reduced emissions by 19.2%² - suggesting that by pledging a 20% reduction under the Kyoto Protocol it will not further reduce emissions this decade.

Does that trajectory align with the science for 2C:

Prior to the EU meeting, several scientific voices expressed concern over the proposed 40% on 1990 level, including Professor Jim Skea, a vice-chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, who says the EU's plan to cut CO2 emissions 40% by 2030 is too weak.³

Business groups in Europe have said "not only is it well below the trajectory needed to prevent global warming of 2 °C, it is even below the capability touted in the EU's own Impact Assessment."⁴

Similarly, leading climate scientist Professor Kevin Anderson, Deputy Director of the Tyndall Centre at the University of Manchester sent an open letter to Prime Minister David Cameron about the inadequacy of the EU targets.

"Put simply, the basic arithmetic of: (1) the IPCC's 2°C carbon budgets; (2) highly optimistic assumptions on deforestation and cement; (3) stringent emissions pathways for industrialising and poorer nations;

¹ <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/eu-priorities-2020/eu-leaders-adopt-flexible-energy-and-climate-targets-2030-309462>

² http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/g-gas/index_en.htm

³ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-29690507>

⁴ <http://bs-europa.eu/eu2030-the-european-commission-climate-and-energy-plan-for-2030/>

and (4) the EU's oft-cited commitment on 2°C; requires the European Council to increase the 2030 target to, at least, an 80% reduction in emissions.

Alternatively, if the Green Paper's 40% target is adopted, the EU should be honest about why it has chosen to renege on its previous 2°C commitments."⁵

Does it align with the principles of equity?

Negotiations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change operate under the principle of equity and *common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities*.

Professor Anderson's letter also details that the 40% cut does not align with what 'equity' would require from the EU.

The Stockholm Environment Institute with Ecoequity have prepared a tool to perform an 'equity reference framework' calculation, which also suggests that 40% is very far from the EU's fairshare of a pathway to limiting warming to 2°C.

Several NGOs have released an assessment of climate fairshares that argues the EU's reductions should be -74-84% on 1990 levels in 2030 and accompanied by significant financial and technology transfers⁶ – these proposals also align with those detailed by Professor Anderson.

What does this mean?

- The European Union has released a position that does not align with the globally agreed goal of 2°C or leave room to reach the 1.5°C limit that many call for.
- Each country should take climate action according to the principle of equity and it is difficult to perceive the EU's current position as conforming with this principle.
- If the EU has abandoned the 2°C goal it should be honest with its negotiating partners, and its own citizens, and prepare much more significant budgets for adaptation and loss and damage costs.
- We need confirmation of the other potential elements of the EU's contribution to the 2015 agreement – potentially including but not limited to – INDCs on adaptation, finance, technology transfer, and capacity building.

⁵ <http://kevinanderson.info/blog/letter-to-the-pm-outlining-how-2c-demands-an-80-cut-in-eu-emissions-by-2030/>

⁶ www.climatefairshares.org