

Questions and answers on the Paris Agreement

What is the EU's overall assessment of the Paris Agreement?

- The Paris Agreement is a major success for the United Nations and intergovernmental cooperation, and is the first major multilateral deal of the twenty-first century.
- As a universal and legally binding Agreement, it sends a clear signal to all stakeholders, investors, businesses, civil society and policy-makers that the global transition to clean energy is here to stay and resources have to shift away from fossil fuels. It sets out a global action plan to put the world on track to avoid dangerous climate change by limiting global warming to well below 2°C – and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C.
- The Paris Agreement contains all the indispensable ingredients of a regime that delivers real and effective climate action – including a long-term goal, a 5-year ambition cycle and a transparency and accountability system.
- The Agreement and the decisions in Paris also confirm that developed countries will continue to take the lead in mobilising climate finance to support the poorest and most vulnerable countries. This will help them reduce their emissions, prepare for the impacts of climate change, and build capacity to participate more effectively in the Agreement's enhanced transparency framework.

Will the Paris Agreement ensure temperature increase stays within the well below 2 degree objective?

- In order to achieve the long term goals contained in the Agreement, governments will regularly set or update their emissions reductions targets. In advance of the Paris conference, almost all Parties had presented their 'intended nationally determined contributions' – INDCs – covering 5- or 10-year periods starting in 2020.
- These national climate action plans, communicated by 189 participating countries to date, will not be sufficient to meet the ambition level required to stay well below 2°C. However, they make a decisive difference in lowering the risks of dangerous changes in the global environment caused by climate change.
- Anticipating this shortfall in ambition, the Paris Agreement agreed on an "ambition cycle", a set of goals, timeframes, commitments, and stocktakes designed to ensure that Parties regularly strengthen their commitments.
- Starting from 2023, governments will come together every five years in a 'global stocktake', based on latest science and implementation progress to date. The stocktake will set the context for the raising of ambition by all Parties by looking at what has been collectively achieved and what more needs to be done to achieve the below 2°C objective.
- A facilitative dialogue will be held in 2018 – even before the Paris Agreement is likely to enter into force – to take stock of the collective efforts and to inform the preparation of further contributions. This is particularly important for Parties that have 2025 targets as they are expected to communicate their 2030 targets by 2020.

How does the Paris Agreement ensure countries deliver on their commitments?

- The transparency, accountability and compliance system under the Paris Agreement is not punitive, but is meant to identify when Parties are off track and help them to get back on track if they are not delivering.
- Underpinning this system are new and comprehensive requirements, institutions and procedures applicable to all Parties to track and facilitate Parties' performance. These include technical expert reviews, a multilateral peer review process, and a standing committee on implementation and compliance. Together these will maintain a focus on both technical and political aspects of performance.
- Furthermore, the five-yearly 'global stocktake' will assess collective progress prior to each round of new commitments.

Are countries' emissions reductions targets legally binding?

- All Parties have a legally binding obligation to prepare, communicate and maintain a nationally determined mitigation contribution. This ends the old division of countries in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol, under which only some countries have mitigation commitments.
- While strictly speaking, Parties are not legally bound at the international level to achieve their targets, each Party is legally bound to pursue domestic mitigation measures, with the aim of achieving the objectives of their contributions. This, combined with robust transparency and accountability provisions, provides a solid basis for an inclusive regime.

When is the Paris Agreement expected to enter into force?

- The Agreement will enter into force when at least 55 Parties representing at least an estimated 55% of total greenhouse gas emissions join, by ratifying, accepting or approving it (depending on their constitutions).
- These numbers have been chosen to ensure the participation of the largest emitters – in particular China, the US, and the EU – but at the same time not setting the bar so high as to delay entry into force.
- It is therefore not known when precisely the Agreement will enter into force – but it should do so as early as possible and certainly before 2020, at which point the targets set by countries will start to take effect.

How does the Agreement address greenhouse gas emissions from the aviation and shipping sectors?

- International aviation and maritime activities are a significant and growing source of emissions. Their role and contribution is therefore key and will need to be addressed.
- Although these two sectors are not explicitly mentioned in the Paris Agreement, the case for action is reinforced by the Agreement's aim to peak global emissions as soon as possible, and achieve a balance between man-made emissions by sources and

removals by sinks of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century. No part of the economy will be left out in achieving these goals.

- Work is ongoing in the International Civil Aviation Organization and the International Maritime Organization, respectively, to specifically address these fast-growing emissions.

How does the Paris Agreement address loss and damage associated with the impacts of climate change? Does the Agreement imply liability and compensation as a result?

- The Paris Agreement recognises the importance of averting, minimising and addressing loss and damage associated with climate change, including extreme weather events and slow onset events such as the loss of fresh water aquifers and glaciers.
- The Agreement addresses these concerns by strengthening and anchoring the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage to promote cooperation on these issues. This will include further work on emergency response and insurance issues and a task force to develop recommendations on approaches to address displacement due to climate change.
- An accompanying decision taken in Paris clarifies that the provisions in the Paris Agreement on loss and damage do not involve or provide a basis for any liability or compensation.

What does the Paris Agreement mean for the EU's contribution to climate finance for developing countries before 2020?

- At the Copenhagen climate conference in 2009, developed countries collectively committed to contribute USD 100 billion of climate finance per year by 2020 in the context of meaningful mitigation action and transparency of implementation. A recent OECD report has estimated that developing countries mobilised USD 62 billion of climate finance in 2014.
- The EU collectively provides more aid than all other donors¹ combined, having delivered EUR 59.2 billion in 2014, and is committed to achieve the UN 0.7% ODA/GNI target within the time frame of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. In 2014, the EU and its Member States contributed EUR 14.5 billion from public budgets and other development finance institutions to support climate action in developing countries. The EU and its Member States are committed to further scaling up climate finance: in the run up to and during the Paris conference, the EU and 18 Member States made announcements of increased climate finance in the coming years.
- The accompanying Decision to the Paris Climate Agreement calls for enhanced action prior to 2020. It urges developed countries to scale up climate finance and prepare a concrete roadmap to achieving the 100 billion goal by 2020, covering both mitigation and adaptation action. It also urges developed countries to significantly increase adaptation finance from current levels and to provide more support for capacity building and appropriate technology.

¹ All donors that are members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC).

Will the EU need to provide more climate finance after 2020? Will developing countries also contribute to climate finance?

- Developed countries have committed to continue to provide climate finance for mitigation and adaptation action. They will continue to provide USD 100 billion of climate finance per year until 2025. The EU and its Member States will contribute their fair share of this goal. A new and higher collective quantified goal is to be set by 2025.
- So called South-South cooperation between developing countries is growing and is recognised as an important element of international cooperation for development also in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development agenda. The Paris Agreement encourages developing countries, including the emerging economies, to provide or continue to provide climate finance voluntarily, while developed countries should continue to take the lead in mobilising climate finance from a variety of sources, including both public and private as well as alternative sources, and using a variety of instruments and channels.

Will the Green Climate Fund continue to be the main fund serving the Agreement?

- The Green Climate Fund, the Global Environment Facility, the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund will continue to serve the Paris Agreement. The Adaptation Fund set up under the Kyoto Protocol may also serve the Agreement.

What is the difference between an Agreement and a Protocol?

- There is no relevant difference between a Protocol and an Agreement of the kind adopted in Paris. Both are internationally legally binding agreements.
- The UN Climate Convention contains a technical rule relating to the adoption of "a Protocol". This so-called "6 months" rule requires that a text to be adopted as a Protocol needs to be made available to the Parties 6 months prior to the adoption. The Paris Agreement met the requirements of the 6 month rule.