

COP24 outcome receives mixed response

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News

The UN Climate Change Conference (COP24) ended at the weekend with the adoption of a “rulebook” designed to enforce the Paris Agreement on climate change.



Photo Credit: Press Association

MEPs, NGOs and the business community have given a mixed response to the COP24 conference in Katowice, Poland which concluded at the weekend.

The European Commission welcomed the outcome but Green MEPs and NGOs said COP24 had “failed to deliver.”

The completion of the “rulebook” designed to enforce the Paris Agreement on climate change was the EU’s top objective in the negotiations, which ran a day over time.

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The Commission says that the rulebook will enable the parties to the Paris Agreement to “implement, track and progressively enhance” their contributions to tackling climate change.

The meeting, which ended after two weeks of negotiations, saw delegates agree on the first ever universal system for parties to track and report progress in climate action, which provides flexibility to those countries that genuinely need it.

This, said the Commission, will “inspire all to improve their practices over time and communicate the progress made in clear and comparable terms.”

Reacting to the outcome of the climate summit on Monday, EU commissioner for climate action and energy Miguel Arias Cañete said: “In Europe, and working united as Europeans, we have reached a balanced deal on the rules to turn the Paris Agreement into action.”

“We have responded to the urgency of science by acknowledging positively the IPCC special report on global warming of 1.5°C” **Miguel Arias Cañete, European Commissioner**

“The EU played an instrumental role in reaching this outcome, working with allies from both developed and developing countries and with major economies - in particular China - to raise ambition and strengthen global efforts to fight climate change. We have responded to the urgency of science by acknowledging positively the IPCC special report on global warming of 1.5°C.”

“This was a key ask for the EU and its allies. The Paris rulebook is fundamental for enabling and encouraging climate action at all levels worldwide – and success here also means success for multilateralism and the rules-based global order.”

“The EU will continue to lead by turning our commitments into concrete action in the transition to a climate-neutral future and inspiring other countries to make this necessary transition,” Cañete added.

“BIG DISAPPOINTMENT”

Not all reactions to the conference outcome were as positive, however.

Dutch MEP Bas Eickhout, Greens/EFA representative to the European Parliament delegation in Katowice and leading candidate of the European Greens for the next European elections, said that the COP24 conference was meant to agree on how to keep global warming well below 2°C, preferably 1.5°C, but that governments “did not deliver.”

“This COP was a big disappointment. It showed that there is a major gap between the expectations of

citizens and the analysis of scientists on one hand and the decisions of governments on the other hand.”

"In Katowice, only technical progress was made but the thousands of people on the street don't demonstrate for a rulebook. They want ambitious climate protection. The governments disregarded citizens and scientists, who showed in the recent IPCC report that more ambitious action is urgently needed to keep global warming well below 2°C."

"In Katowice, only technical progress was made but the thousands of people on the street don't demonstrate for a rulebook. They want ambitious climate protection" **Bas Eickhout MEP**

Further reaction came from Yannick Jadot, climate spokesperson of the Greens/EFA group, who said, "Member states have a major responsibility for the weak COP24 outcome. After the dropout of the United States, the EU was the only party that could have brought the climate talks forward. But European governments didn't show any leadership on more ambition."

"The EU can't hide anymore behind a vague long-term strategy, if we want [to reach] the global climate targets. To put pressure on the other governments, the EU needs to come to the UN General Assembly in September with a clear commitment to reduce emissions by 55 percent in 2030."

ONE STEP FORWARD FOR BUSINESSES

Elsewhere, BusinessEurope director general Markus J. Beyrer said, "After years of negotiations, it is positive to see that the Paris Rulebook has been agreed upon. Throughout the two weeks, the COP24 presidency has worked hard and the EU was mobilised to promote a set of strong monitoring, verification and accounting rules."

"We were expecting even more guarantees that all major economies will apply the same rules, but the end result brings us one step forward. That is important to acknowledge."

"These common rules are key for European businesses because many of them compete on a global stage. These rules are crucial to give clarity and guarantees to companies to enhance their business activities and investments in zero- and low-emissions solutions."

"The weak outcome of this COP runs contrary to stark warnings of the IPCC report and growing demand for action from citizens" **Wendel Trio, Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe**

But Beyrer warned, "Much more work will be required to create the conditions for a collective effort to enhance global emissions reduction. All major economies will need to deliver on this ambitious agenda. The European business community stands ready to work with policymakers."

Wendel Trio, director of Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe, said: "The weak outcome of this COP runs contrary to stark warnings of the IPCC report and growing demand for action from citizens."

"Governments have again delayed adequate action to avoid catastrophic climate breakdown. The EU needs to push ahead and lead by example, by providing more support to poor countries and increasing its climate pledge before the UN secretary general summit in September 2019."

“It must be a significant increase, even beyond the 55 percent reduction some member states and the European Parliament are calling for,” Trio added.

About the author

Martin Banks is a senior reporter at The Parliament Magazine

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