

EU policymakers gear up to underscore urgency of climate action at COP25

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News

European Parliament President David Sassoli is part of a parliamentary delegation to the COP25 climate conference in Madrid, which begins on Monday.



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Sassoli, an Italian deputy, will attend the opening session and, according to a Parliament spokesman, will “deliver a message” from MEPs about what needs to be done to tackle climate change.

Last week, MEPs backed a resolution declaring a climate emergency, while on Friday a new poll showed that EU citizens think climate action should be a “top priority” for Parliament and the EU.

Dutch member Bas Eickhout, from the Greens, will lead Parliament’s delegation at the climate event in Spain.

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The Commission's new President Ursula von der Leyen is representing the executive in Madrid on her first day in office.

In a speech later on Monday, von der Leyen will say, "In ten days from now, the European Commission will present the European Green Deal. Our goal is to be the first climate neutral continent by 2050. If we want to achieve that goal, we have to act now, we have to implement our policies now. Because we know that this transition needs a generational change."

COP25 brings together governments, businesses, local authorities and civil society to work on the rule book for implementing the Paris Agreement and to build momentum for more ambition in the years ahead.

The Madrid conference will focus on completing negotiations on the single outstanding element of the 'Katowice Rulebook': the guidance on voluntary cooperation and market-based mechanisms under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.

"Our goal is to be the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. If we want to achieve that goal, we have to act now, we have to implement our policies now" **Ursula von der Leyen, European Commission President**

Work will be taken forward in areas including, oceans, finance, the transparency of climate action, forests and agriculture, technology and capacity building.

The EU delegation will be led by the executive Vice-President for the European Green Deal, Frans Timmermans, and Krista Mikkonen, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change of the Finnish Presidency of the EU.

High-Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell, Executive Vice-President for an economy that works for people, Valdis Dombrovskis, Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries Virginijus Sinkevičius and Commissioner for Energy Kadri Simson will also attend for various events during the next two weeks.

During COP25, which concludes on 13 December, the EU will host over 100 side events.

Speaking ahead of the start of COP25, Spanish MEP Iratxe García Pérez, who leads Parliament's Socialist group, said, "Fighting climate warming is no longer an option but an obligation. There is no time to waste, because our planet is at risk."

“Scientists are telling us that this is an emergency, because the changing climate is already having a negative impact, not only on biodiversity but it has already become a threat to humanity.”

“We need to act now if we want to correct the trend and extreme weather events, desertification, rising sea and ocean levels and loss of biodiversity. We know that there are already millions of climate refugees and that it is the poor who are suffering the most in this climate emergency. We will see more people striving for water and food if we don't act.”

“Fighting climate warming is no longer an option but an obligation. There is no time to waste, because our planet is at risk” **Iratxe García Pérez, S&D leader**

She added, “I hope that the world leaders meeting in the COP25 in Madrid this week will hear the call of the European Parliament.”

Maltese MEP Miriam Dalli said, “Global warming is a fact and this is an emergency. Melting glaciers and rising sea levels are a fact and this is an emergency. Frequent wildfires, long periods of drought and more and more intense tropical storms are facts, and this is a climate emergency.”

“Parliament places itself at the forefront of the fight against climate change. This will represent a powerful sign to the European and world leaders before the upcoming COP25 to push them to urgently take the concrete actions needed in order to fight and contain this threat before it is too late.”

Separately, the assembly's environment committee will on Tuesday outline its demands for the Biodiversity Convention's COP15, the biodiversity equivalent of the Paris agreement on climate change, taking place in China in 2020.

MEPs can propose the agreement to include ambitious legally-binding targets, detailed timelines and clear performance indicators.

The same committee will also vote on an EU roadmap to tackle the decline of bees and other pollinators in Europe. Proposals will aim to tackle the causes of pollinator decline as well as promoting awareness on the consequences of the phenomenon.

Meanwhile, the five candidates standing for the EU ombudsman's role will be quizzed by the petitions committee on Tuesday.

They come from Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Estonia and Sweden and will present their priorities in a public hearing organised by the committee. The full house is expected to elect the new ombudsman by secret ballot during the December plenary session.

In a busy week in Brussels, the new European Central Bank president Christine Lagarde will be heard, for the first time in her new role, by members of the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee.

MEPs are expected to discuss with her the economic perspectives of the euro area and the next steps for the ECB's monetary policy, including the decision-making process on rate setting.

About the author

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