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EU climate policy

Jaded rhetoric from environment ministers will not break UN climate deadlock

At their Council meeting today, EU environment ministers failed to make progress on the key political issues for the EU negotiating position at the UN climate talks. Commenting on the outcome of the Council, Finnish Green MEP **Satu Hassi** said:

"Environment ministers have regrettably recycled the same old jaded rhetoric on the headline political issues regarding the EU position for the UN climate talks. The UN climate talks are in a dangerous deadlock and breaking this deadlock will require leadership from the big industrialised countries. Unfortunately, the EU is continuing to cop out of its responsibility for the COP15 (the UN climate talks in Copenhagen).

"Reiterating the 18 month old promise to possibly improve the EU emissions target to a 30% reduction by 2020 is simply not enough at this stage. Other industrialised countries have already proposed targets that go beyond the EU target on a comparative scale (1). The EU needs to step up its target if it is to break the deadlock in the UN climate talks. If the EU is serious about the objective to restrict global warming below 2 degrees, it must adopt a minimum 40% domestic target.

"It is welcome that environment ministers want to put the issue of emissions from air and shipping transport clearly on the agenda of the UN climate talks. These are some of the fastest growing sectors of EU emissions. Unfortunately, the EU wants these two polluting sectors to be let off lightly. The emissions reductions being suggested by environment ministers are far below what would actually be required for the aviation and shipping industries to take a comparative share of the necessary global emissions reductions (2).

"On the crucial issue of emissions from deforestation in the context of the climate talks, the EU seems to be sitting on the fence. Despite the clear concerns of including these projects in the carbon market, EU governments refuse to completely rule this out (3).

"The climate talks are in a crisis and if they fail to deliver an agreement to limit global warming below 2 degrees, the EU would have to assume serious responsibility for this failure. It is now up to EU leaders to seize the bit when they meet at the EU summit next week."

Notes to editors

(1) Japan has proposed a 25% reduction by 2020 from 1990 levels, while Norway has proposed a 40% target. These targets go beyond those of the EU on a fair model to share the effort of emissions reductions among industrialised countries.

(2) Environment ministers suggest reduction targets of emissions from shipping and aviation of 20% and 10% respectively from 2005 levels. This would accept a significant growth of their emissions since 1990 (the base year for other sectors).

(3) The European Commission has clearly indicated its preference for REDD (Reduction in Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation) to be excluded from carbon markets.

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