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EU needs to do more than Trump bashing

Climate

The European Parliament has today backed a report setting out binding emission reductions designed to meet the EU's Paris Agreement commitments (the 'effort sharing regulation'). The decision comes only hours after a debate criticising US President Trump's decision to withdraw from the agreement. EU leaders need to do more to make sure their action matches their rhetoric, says Greens/EFA climate spokesperson **Bas Eickhout**:

"It is heartening that so many European leaders have lined up to attack Trump's reckless decision and to pledge their renewed commitment to the Paris climate agreement. However, leadership requires action as well as words. The reduction targets agreed today will go some way towards curbing emissions in the EU. But make no mistake, they are not strong enough to honour the commitments made in the Paris Agreement.

"Even before one considers the numerous loopholes that member states will use to further weaken the deal, the pace of transition is too slow. We need to be much more ambitious on tackling emissions in big sectors like road transport, agriculture and waste. The US President's disastrous attitude towards the climate may make us all look good by comparison, but simply being better than Trump should not be the limit of our ambition."

Greens/EFA co-president **Ska Keller**, who spoke for the group in the Trump debate, adds:

"It is rare that we see so much vocal enthusiasm for climate protection. But while Trump has inspired many angry speeches from EU leaders, actions need to change too. Many, including the German government, are happy to present themselves as climate saviours while continuing to water down the policies needed to protect our environment.

"We in the EU have a huge responsibility, not just because we are the third biggest polluter of CO2 worldwide, but because we have the technologies and the power to tackle our emissions. We Greens will not stop fighting for an ambitious climate policy, to lead the fight against climate change and to deliver good jobs with real future prospects."

Background

In 2014, EU Heads of State and Government agreed to reduce EU emissions by at least 40% by 2030 (compared to 1990). The ‘Effort Sharing Regulation’ (ESR) sets binding national emission reduction targets for 2021-2030 for road transport, buildings, agriculture and waste. These sectors represent around 60% of EU greenhouse gas emissions.

Collectively, EU countries will have to achieve an overall EU ESR reduction target of 30% below 2005 emissions levels by 2030. This is not ambitious enough to meet the Paris Agreement. Indeed, with the loopholes included in the Commission’s proposal, emissions may only fall by 23% percent. Loopholes include creating credits from planting trees and managing soils and some member states want to be able to receive credits even if they fail to meet their own projections. In addition, some states want to offset efforts using surplus ETS allowances.

For more details, please see the briefing on our website or our podcast with Bas Eickhout.

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Ska Keller

Member

Contact person



David Weir

Press & Media Advisor EN (English language press)

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