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Promises must be met with climate action this decade

COP26

Talks at the COP26 UN Climate Conference have resulted in a series of ill-defined promises and announcements, insufficient to keep global temperature rises below 1.5°C. We are still far from reducing our global emissions by 45% by 2030. The Greens/EFA Group also criticises the last-minute change submitted by China and India to further weaken the text on the necessary phase-out of coal and of fossil fuels subsidies. On climate mitigation and adaptation, the European Union did not do enough to prevent the effects of climate change from affecting vulnerable people predominantly in the global south. The Greens/EFA Group call on leaders to seize the momentum also created by civil society in order to turn pledges into concrete action by the next COP in 2022.

Bas Eickhout MEP, Greens/EFA Vice Chair of the Environment Committee and part of the European Parliament delegation to COP26, comments:

“Whether we will be on track to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees depends on whether we can close the gap between promises and actions this decade. We cannot afford to keep kicking the can, or rather the oil barrels, down the road. The numbers show we are on course for extreme flooding, forest fires, famines, and the loss of a livable habitat for humans and animals alike. This urgency was felt by civil society, more than by the COP negotiators. We now have a year to bring the demands of people marching on the streets to the negotiation tables in Egypt.

“The need to align financial flows with the Paris Agreement was urgently needed, but with such weak wording and no concrete end date on fossil fuel subsidies, this declaration risks becoming little more than an empty headline.

“To make the Green Deal a reality and to stick to the promises made in Glasgow, the Greens/EFA Group urges the European Commission to bring their rules on sustainable investments in line with the promises of a

greener economy. Any inclusion of fossil gas and nuclear projects in the taxonomy regulation will amount to greenwashing.”

“The rules that will regulate international carbon markets that have been agreed today are weak. The EU now needs to regulate private companies that claim to become climate-neutral to ensure no double-counting.”

Pär Holmgren MEP, Greens/EFA member of the European Parliament delegation to COP26, comments:

“COP26 has come out with big words and promises but now we need real climate action this decade. The science is clear, we have an incredibly tight timeframe to act, if we are to avoid climate catastrophe. Today’s decision is a clear call to all countries to come back next year with increased targets so that we can reach -45% global emissions reduction by 2030. This is the only way we can really keep 1.5°C within reach. This agreement mounts the pressure on COP27 in Egypt.

“The world needs to tackle climate change together, but some have to shoulder more responsibility than others. The European Commission has not risen to the opportunity to be a bridge builder between the global north and south and to overcome effects of climate change where it hits hardest.

“The climate crisis is already an existential crisis for many and we urgently need climate justice now. This was the first COP where loss and damage was at the top of the agenda, but it won’t be the last. It’s good that the need for action in this area was finally acknowledged, but I am deeply disappointed that the EU didn’t rise to the occasion and more clearly support the most vulnerable countries.

“Today’s declaration recognises that our carbon budget is dramatically shrinking. We need binding action and legislation as fast as possible to keep fossil fuels in the ground.”

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