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Press release | 27.01.2010

UN climate talks

Greens submit alternative emissions reduction target to UN climate body on behalf of EU

The EU today decided on the emissions reduction target it will submit to the UN Convention on Climate Change as specified under the Copenhagen Accord - a 20/30% reduction by 2020 from 1990 levels. The European Greens have already submitted an alternative target of 40% to the UNFCCC on behalf of the European Union. The submission was made to meet the 31 January deadline set out under the Copenhagen Accord - the document that was produced by a group of countries at the UN climate summit in Copenhagen, the status of which remains unclear.

The 40% reduction target submitted by the Greens is the minimum target necessary for the EU to meet its own goal of limiting the increase in global average temperature to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and the EU's responsibilities to this end. The Greens are urging the UNFCCC to accept this submission in place of the insufficient submission that will be made by the Spanish presidency of the EU.

Commenting on the submissions, Greens/EFA Co-President **Rebecca Harms** said:

"The EU has reached a disappointing decision to submit outdated emissions reduction targets that clearly don't cut it any more at international level. Only by stepping up to a 40% target will the EU be able to meet its own goals, restore its responsibility and ensure its climate policies act as a true economic stimulus.

"The ill-defined EU commitment to a 20-30% emissions cut by 2020 may have broke ground in March 2007 but the failure to move forward since is undermining the EU's credibility. Neither a 20% nor a 30% target is consistent with the EU's stated goal of limiting global warming to 2°C. It also would require little deviation from the EU beyond its expected emissions trend and, as such, places the EU targets far behind those of other countries.

"For this reason, while the Greens believe the UNFCCC negotiations remain the only show in town for a global climate deal, we want to seize the initiative on behalf of the EU and submit the target that EU itself should be submitting."

Back story:

While the UNFCCC negotiations remain the only official forum for international efforts to address climate change, the EU has signaled its intention to associate with the Copenhagen Accord. To this end, the Spanish presidency of the EU has submitted emissions reductions targets to be added to an appendix of the accord.

The targets submitted by the Spanish presidency are drawn from the outdated commitment made by the European Council in March 2007, namely a unilateral economy-wide emissions reduction target of 20% by 2020, compared to 1990 levels, with a commitment to increase this to 30% under unclear und undefined conditions.

Clearly, these targets are inconsistent with the EU's stated goal of limiting the increase in global average temperature to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and its responsibilities to this end. The EU's failure to adapt its position in the UN negotiations also played a role in its sidelining during the Copenhagen summit.

On top of this, recent research has shown that the EU's current pledges would require very little deviation from a business as usual scenario. This would mean the EU share of the global effort would be far below that of many other parties in the UN climate process.

In order to be consistent with its own 2°C goal and its global responsibility, the EU emissions target should be a 40% reduction by 2020, compared to 1990 levels. This would be in line with the EU's responsibility for the emissions reductions recommended by the IPCC. It would also help spur European economies back to life and create jobs.

The European Greens continue to believe that the UNFCCC process remains the only hope for achieving a truly international, legally-binding agreement to prevent dangerous climate change.

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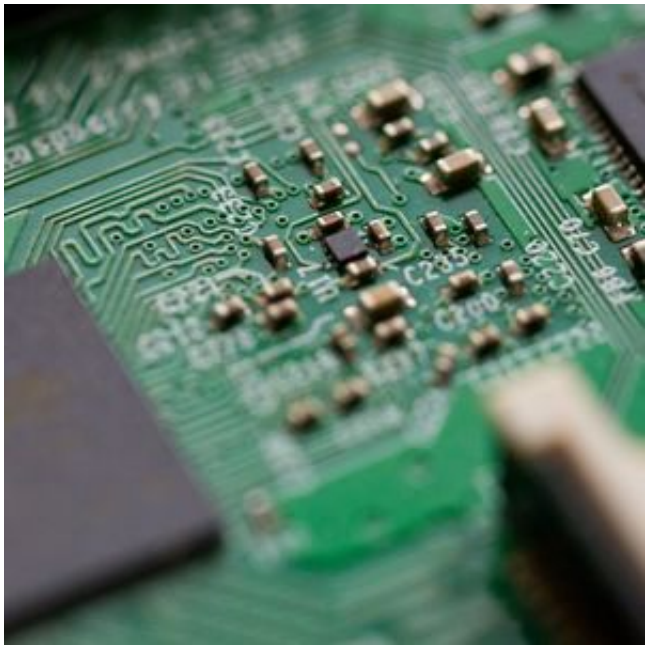


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