EUROPEAN UNION

Committee of the Regions

ENVE-VI/002

4th Commission meeting 30 June 2015

DRAFT OPINION

Commission for the Environment, Climate Change and Energy

Towards a global climate agreement in Paris

Rapporteur: **Annabelle Jaeger (FR/PES)**
Member of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Regional Council

This document will be discussed at the meeting of the **Commission for the Environment, Climate Change and Energy** to be held from **11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Tuesday 30 June 2015**. To allow time for translation, any amendments must be submitted through the online tool for tabling amendments (available on the Members' Portal: http://cor.europa.eu/members) **no later than 3 p.m. (Brussels time) on Wednesday 17 June 2015**. A user guide is available at http://toad.cor.europa.eu/CORHelp.aspx.

— Rue Belliard/Belliardstraat 101 — 1040 Bruxelles/Brussel — BELGIQUE/BELGIË —
Tel. +32 22822211 — Fax +32 22822325 — Internet: http://www.cor.europa.eu

EN

Reference document

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council — The Paris Protocol — A blueprint for tackling global climate change beyond 2020
COM(2015) 81 final

Draft opinion of the Commission for the environment, climate change and energy - Towards a global climate agreement in Paris

I. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

In the run-up to the 21st Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 21), and in line with its previous reports[1]:

- strongly supports the European Union (EU) playing its full role as leader in international negotiations;
- urges the EU to step up its efforts prior to 2020 and accelerate the entry into force of the new climate change agreement, particularly in the areas of energy efficiency, the $C0_2$ pricing signal in Europe and mobilising international funding for tackling climate change in developing countries;
- encourages it to raise its level of Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) before Paris and no later than 2016, and believes that the Paris agreement should be a sustainable, dynamic agreement that provides a mechanism allowing state contributions to be evaluated and enhanced regularly (every five years);
- encourages the EU to show how it will honour its share of the financial commitments taken in Copenhagen in 2009 and to defend a fair approach towards funding and differentiation, which will promote energy transition and resilience in the poorest and most vulnerable areas in the world;
- calls for a new global climate governance model based on the principles of multi-level governance, that fully recognises the action of non-state actors and that would allow each level of government to maximise its climate action.

An ambitious agreement in Paris – the decisive role of the European Union

1. In light of the Fifth Assessment Report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and its summary report, the CoR is deeply concerned that the world is not on track to keep the temperature increase below 2 C. It recognises the urgent need to step up efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, to adapt to the impacts of climate change and to adopt an agreement in Paris which will allow temperatures to remain below this threshold.

2. Consequently, the CoR calls on the EU to actively support a long-term global target based on the safest IPCC scenarios. The aim is to reach zero carbon emissions in 2050. A shared target of this kind would send a strong signal to all countries and stakeholders, particularly investors, steering the global economy away from fossil fuels. In relation to this, the CoR also points out that the EU has set a long-term target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80 to 95% by 2050.

---

1 CoR Opinion on The 2020-2030 climate and energy framework, CoR 2691/2014, Annabelle Jaeger (FR/PES); CoR Opinion on the Green Paper for a 2030 framework for climate and energy policies, CoR 5810/2013, Sirpa Hertell (FI/EPP); CoR Resolution on COP 19 UNFCCC – Advancing the International Climate Change Agenda, CoR 5883/2013; CoR Opinion on the EU Strategy for adaptation to climate change, CoR 3752/2013, Neil Swannick (UK/PES).

3. The CoR considers the first commitments made by the EU as part of its INDC to be a move in the right direction. However, the CoR urges the EU to go further by deciding to carry out an upwards revision of its fixed obligations, set by the European Council in October 2014. The CoR believes[2] that a greenhouse gas reduction of at least 50% in Europe would be both realistic and beneficial for Europe. It is also possible and desirable to achieve at least a 40% share of renewable energies and 40% energy efficiency. Furthermore, the CoR believes that the EU should support the inclusion in the Paris agreement of commitment periods and revision cycles of five years, beginning in 2025. This will avoid becoming locked into a lower target for a long period, and take regular account of developments in science and technology.

4. The CoR calls on the EU to set out a financial package to support efforts to adapt to climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in developing countries before COP21. The CoR is awaiting a roadmap on increasing funding from the EU. Funding should be predictable, transparent, new and additional. In this document, the EU will indicate how it intends to honour its pledge to raise its fair share of the commitment of USD 100 billion dollars per year by 2020. In the Paris agreement, the EU should also support the principle of new financial commitments for the post-2020 period, drawn up every five years with separate objectives for adaptation – which has been the "poor relation" of climate funding;

5. The CoR welcomes the European Commission's (EC) position on including adaptation as a pillar of the agreement (along with the reduction of greenhouse gases and funding). It is essential to recognise the clear link between the increase in temperature and the increased need for adaptation. The CoR is also pleased that in the end, the Green Climate Fund has decided to divide its funding equally between climate change mitigation and adaptation. It recommends that the EC use the Mayors Adapt initiative – launched in 2014 as part of the EU Strategy on adaptation to climate change – as a possible example of good practice for international partners to follow in order to improve the resilience of local areas. The developing countries, in particular the least developed countries and small island states, are the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change: the new climate agreement should take account of their adaptation needs.

6. The CoR also recommends that the European Union increase its efforts to tackle climate change now (without waiting for the entry into force of the Paris agreement in 2020), by:

- significantly increasing the price of carbon in Europe, until it reaches a credible level that will redirect public and private investment. After the adoption of the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) market stability reserve[3], the post-2020 structural reform of this tool should permanently reduce the surplus of $C0_2$ allowances and increase the Member States' yield from the sale of allowances. The European Union should support allocating all income from the EU ETS to energy transition and to the global fight against climate change (at least 50% to the Green Climate Fund);

---

2 CoR 2691/2014 Opinion on A policy framework for climate and energy in the period from 2020 to 2030, Annabelle Jaeger (FR/PES).

3 (European Union Emissions Trading Scheme – EU ETS).

- rapidly reducing public support and subsidies for fossil fuels, the main cause of climate change (whether for exploring new reserves, production or consumption);
- supporting specific local activities and mobilising all stakeholders.

The regions and towns – driving the success of climate objectives

7. The cities and regions have a key role to play in achieving and strengthening national climate change targets. Because they deal with mobility, transport, urban planning, construction, energy and green infrastructure, they are indispensable players in the global effort to reduce greenhouse emissions and increase resilience to the effects of climate change.

8. The CoR is delighted to note that the new climate regime seems set to put more emphasis on the effective implementation of commitments taken under the Paris Protocol. The role of cities and regions has been highlighted by the Commission and many other stakeholders at the UN[4] talks on climate change. These parties advocate that the new agreement should recognise action taken by cities and regions, without which the Member States would not be able to meet their commitments. The credibility of the pledges made by the parties will depend on the firm and real commitment of non-state actors such as cities, regions, industry or investors.

9. A stronger focus on the Covenant of Mayors, together with an extension until 2030, is necessary in order to give fresh impetus to the 6300 European cities and regions that have signed it and that are committed to going further than European targets for lowering greenhouse gas emissions by 2020. The CoR supports the expansion of the Covenant of Mayors at global level and calls on the EC to provide the necessary means for such action, as it respects local realities. This expansion should be done in coordination with other global initiatives carried out by networks of local authorities, such as the Compact of Mayors.

10. The CoR calls on the Commission to support the inclusion of quantifiable, measurable efforts made by cities and regions in the national contributions in the new agreement (on lowering greenhouse gases, energy savings and renewable energies). The CoR deems it necessary to create the appropriate conditions – in terms of regulation and financial mechanisms – to enable cities and regions to pursue the best courses of action.

11. The CoR highlights the need for a voluntary and innovative investment policy which is geared towards the regions in sustainable projects – particularly in the area of energy and adaptation. This policy should involve cities and regions in the process of allocating funding and include smaller scale projects under the Junker plan. It recommends examining the prospect of deducting climate investment from the "Maastricht" debt calculation.

12. The CoR recommends facilitating access for cities and regions to the main global climate funds, namely: the Green Climate Fund, the Global Climate Facility and the Adaptation Fund. In particular, direct access to global climate funds for regional and local authorities in the most vulnerable developing countries, particularly the Green Climate fund would enable such

4 United Nations.

stakeholders to step up their activities, as part of a shared approach to climate change and the millennium development goals.

13. The CoR proposes a global climate governance system that places the work of cities and regions on an official footing, based on the principles of multi-level governance:

- it notes that regional and local authorities want to see a paragraph on their essential role in addressing climate issues included in the text of the new agreement and to have their role in the process of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) formalised, in order to be able to maximise their potential for climate action;
- it requests particularly that a day dedicated to local authorities – as well as a space dedicated to local governments – be organised systematically during COPs by the secretariat of the UNFCCC and the host country, as has been done for COP21 this year;
- in addition, it calls for a structured dialogue to be established during the round of negotiations and not only during the end-of-year international conferences. The Commission could set an example by establishing a dialogue with the CoR several times a year before and during conferences organised by the UNFCCC (COP and preparatory conferences in Bonn, Germany).

14. The CoR welcomes the World Summit on Climate & Territories which will be held in Lyon on 1 and 2 July, as well as the World Summit of Local Governments for Climate to be held in Paris on 4 and 7 December, and it intends to take part. These events are an opportunity for all non-state stakeholders to work together before and during COP21, and to reaffirm their essential role by announcing strong commitments aimed at galvanising global climate action, particularly on the part of states.

15. Finally, the CoR recommends that the European Union support the implementation of a COP decision establishing a work programme on climate action by cities and regions, by defining an modus operandi between local and regional authorities and Member States. One example could be the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which in 2010 adopted an "action plan for the cities and regions"[5]. This kind of plan would constitute a flexible application of the principle of multi-level governance at international level.

The involvement of all stakeholders – a requirement for the success of COP21 and for tackling global climate change

16. The IPCC and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) have stated clearly that, in order to contain global warming below 2°C by the end of the century, all parties must step up their efforts to reduce emissions immediately, beginning with the countries that are primarily responsible for climate change. The new climate change policy should be based on the broad support of all stakeholders and be implemented using a bottom-up approach. In this regard, cities and regions play a vital role in terms of informing, educating and bringing together stakeholder initiatives.

---

5 Decision CBD COP10: X/22 Plan of Action on Subnational Governments, Cities and Other Local Authorities for Biodiversity.https://www.cbd.int/decision/cop/default.shtml?id=12288.

17. Taking account of ongoing discussions on the "Agenda for Action" put forward by the French and Peruvian COP co-presidencies in order to enhance climate action by all stakeholders, the CoR reiterates its desire to see cities and regions involved in this agenda. The CoR:

- calls on the cities and regions of Europe to continue and extend their commitment to measurable targets on reducing greenhouse gases, clean transport, developing renewable energies and energy savings to give new impetus to the Paris agreement. It invites them to join the Covenant of Mayors, and the Compact of Mayors and Compact of States and Regions initiatives and to participate in the major meetings in Lyon and Paris to demonstrate their determination;
- calls on the cities and regions to continue to share best practices with the other Member States, as well as with the North and South, particularly via the NAZCA platform[6], the Compact of Mayors and the Compact of States and Regions;
- is aware that the credibility of commitments taken depends on the selection criteria for projects and initiatives, their transparency, the rigour of methods and the seriousness of their assessment. The Covenant of Mayors is a leader in this field and could inspire other ongoing and upcoming initiatives to ensure that the monitoring, reporting and review system (MRV)[7] is solid. In this regard, the CoR calls on the EU to ensure consistency and harmonisation at EU level, as mentioned above;
- also calls on Europe's cities and regions to use their international decentralised cooperation efforts to support energy transition and resilience in non-EU countries, particularly poor and vulnerable countries. Privileged relations of this kind between regions and cities worldwide could be a vehicle for climate diplomacy at all levels.

18. In the spirit of cooperation, the CoR intends to deliver messages which are consistent with those of the European Economic and Social Committee, demonstrating that the cities and regions are ready for COP21 alongside civil society and businesses.

19. Global warming is one of humanity's greatest challenges in terms of sustainable development, health and the global economy. The Paris Conference is not an end in itself, but the beginning of a dynamic, progressive process that will allow the international community to make adjustments and get back on track when it comes to keeping the rise in temperature below 2°C. A new global agreement on climate in Paris is essential, in order to enable and build momentum among stakeholders, as well as to ensure a collective response commensurate with the scale of the issues at stake.

Brussels,…

---

6 Platform of non-state actors for climate action (Non-State Actor Zone for Climate Change – NAZCA).

7 Monitoring, reporting and review of greenhouse gas emissions (Monitoring, Reporting and Review – MRV).

II. PROCEDURE

Title	
Reference	COM(2015) 81 final
Legal basis	Article 307(1) TFEU
Procedural basis	
Date of Council/EP referral / Date of Commission letter	25 February 2015
Date of Bureau/President's decision	5 March 2015
Commission responsible	Commission for the Environment, Climate Change and Energy (ENVE)
Rapporteur	
Analysis	
Discussion in commission	30 June 2015
Date adopted by commission	30 June 2015
Result of the vote in commission (majority, unanimity)	
Date adopted in plenary	13-14 October 2015
Previous Committee opinions	
Consultation of subsidiarity monitoring network	