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Subject:	European climate diplomacy after COP21 - Council conclusions (15 February 2016)

Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on European climate diplomacy after COP21, as adopted by the Council at its 3447th meeting held on 15 February 2016.

Council conclusions on European climate diplomacy after COP21

1. Recalling its conclusions of July 2015 which invited the High Representative and the Commission to report back in early 2016 on the outcome of the COP21 and its implications for climate diplomacy, the Council adopted the following conclusions.
2. The Council welcomes the Paris Climate Agreement as a landmark achievement for combating climate change, and for multilateralism. The Paris Agreement represents an ambitious, balanced, equitable and legally binding agreement. The adoption of the agreement and the cumulative announcement by the end of COP21 of Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) by 187 Parties marked a decisive turning point towards comprehensive and collective global action, and, when implemented, will definitively and irreversibly accelerate the transition to a climate resilient, climate neutral global economy.
3. The Council congratulates the Parties to the Convention, the United Nations and the Peruvian and French COP Presidencies for their tireless effort and successful work leading to the achievement of the Paris Agreement and expresses its support to the upcoming Moroccan COP22 Presidency.

4. Ahead of and during COP21, the EU and its Member States, building on the strong track record of domestic climate action, engaged, together with many other partners, in a broad "High Ambition Coalition" across different regional groupings of developed and developing countries. This coalition played a critical role in shifting negotiations dynamics at a decisive stage of COP21 and could serve as an approach for building a coalition that would support the timely signature, swift ratification as well as the full implementation by all Parties of the Paris Agreement. Furthermore, EU diplomacy should engage Parties from third countries to encourage updating of their INDCs in order to raise ambitions towards the fulfilment of agreed goals.

5. Maintaining the positive momentum from Paris will require sustained political and diplomatic mobilisation at global level. In order to support international climate objectives, the Council welcomes the elements for climate diplomacy action in 2016 as provided by the External Action Service and the Commission services, in the annex, with a view to the development of an elaborated climate diplomacy action plan for 2016, with key messages, focused around three main strands:
 - Maintaining climate change advocacy as a strategic priority in diplomatic dialogues, public diplomacy and external policy instruments;
 - Supporting implementation of the Paris Agreement and the intended nationally determined contributions (INDC), in the context of low-emission and climate-resilient development;
 - Increasing efforts to address the nexus of climate change, natural resources, including water, prosperity, stability and migration.

6. Climate change, ambitious and urgent climate action, and the implementation of COP21 commitments must remain particular climate diplomacy priorities for the EU, including in high level bilateral and bi-regional dialogues with partner countries, the G7, the G20, at the UN and in other international fora.

7. The Council underlines that diplomatic outreach should also focus on the negotiations in the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) to address greenhouse gas emissions, as well as the Montreal Protocol negotiations on the hydrofluorocarbons (HFC) amendment.

8. The Council recognises the priority to be placed on securing ambitious global implementation of INDCs. In the context of climate diplomacy, the EU and Member States' development cooperation with third countries should fully take into account the existing synergies between climate objectives and the sustainable development goals as adopted by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other international agendas. The role of climate diplomacy is also to advocate for public and private financial flows consistent with the pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate resilient development as referred to in the Paris Agreement, including by widening the range of contributors.

9. The Council underlines that the EU and its Member States are providing financial resources to assist developing countries with respect to both adaptation and mitigation, in continuation of their existing commitments. The Council highlights significant contributions in terms of climate finance from a variety of sources, including through the Green Climate Fund. The role of climate diplomacy is also to encourage and support initiatives such as those by the G7 on climate risk insurance and on renewable energies in Africa, the New York Declaration on Forests, ongoing work in the G20 on green finance and climate finance, and other means of implementation, giving particular attention to the needs of those particularly vulnerable to climate change.

10. The Council underlines the need for the EU and its Member States to keep working to address the direct and indirect international security impacts of climate change. For example, as part of the EU Global Strategy, the EU should therefore work at addressing the strategic and multifaceted threat posed by climate change. The potentially destabilising effects of climate change (including on migration, food security, reliable access to resources, water and energy, spread of epidemic disease, and social and economic instability) should be addressed by the EU, its Member States and partner countries, including through climate risk assessments and support to capacity building. In this context, the EU looks forward to the UN Security Council continuing its work on Climate Change.

11. The Council recognises climate change as a contributing factor to migration resulting from state fragility, insecurity and resource scarcity. By further analysing climate vulnerability links with fragility and security risk, the EU will be in a better position to identify areas where combined risks are particularly high and where there are critical opportunities for conflict prevention and resilience, including in the context of a wider migration challenge. One of the key aspects of the EU climate diplomacy should be practical support for mitigation and adaptation policies in third countries through the implementation and update of INDCs and comprehensive long-term low emission development strategies aiming at global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible and increasing climate resilience, while taking into account third countries' priorities and circumstances.

12. The EU will continue to advocate for the promotion and protection of human rights also in the context of climate change and climate diplomacy. In this regard, the Council also recognises the importance of ensuring women's full, equal and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making. Evidence shows that gender equality, women's empowerment and women's full and equal participation and leadership in economy are vital to achieve sustainable development, including climate change adaptation and mitigation.

13. The Council invites the High Representative, the Commission and the Member States, in line with their respective roles and competences, to continue coordinating and working closely together in implementing EU climate diplomacy through joint and mutually reinforcing initiatives, including pre-2020 mobilisation and post-2020 regime implementation, and overall concerted mobilisation of external action.
14. The Council invites the High Representative and the Commission to work with the Member States to develop an elaborated climate diplomacy action plan for 2016, based on the elements for climate diplomacy action, and to report back by summer 2016 on progress to date and upcoming challenges.

Elements for climate diplomacy action in 2016

Action under strand one: Continue to advocate climate change as a strategic priority in diplomatic dialogues, public diplomacy and external policy instruments.

- The EU and MS will use forthcoming bilateral meetings and multilateral fora, including the G7, the G20 and the UN, to make the case for continued momentum on climate action, and work with partners to create the conditions for positive action and prevent any backsliding.
- The EU and MS will fully integrate into their collective climate diplomacy priorities the objective of reaching an international agreement on a Global Market Based Mechanism to govern future greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for international aviation at the ICAO Assembly in September 2016, give climate diplomacy support on negotiations of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) with the objective of approving a global system of collection of data on fuel consumption and associated GHG emissions from international shipping in April 2016, and reach an agreement on the HFCs amendment under the Montreal Protocol
- Conduct collective high-level outreach via EU Delegations and Member State Embassies at appropriate intervals. These should focus on key decision makers and agents of change, including not only host Governments but also parliamentarians, non-government organisations, green industries and wider civil society. Such outreach should be linked to the policy dialogue with developing countries supported by the Global Climate Change Alliance + flagship.
- Build on the successful experiences in 2015 to enhance collective public diplomacy in host countries. For example, EU Delegations and MS embassies should collaboratively organise an enhanced "Climate Diplomacy Action Day" in 2016, and targeted outreach could be timed to coincide with the planned UN signature ceremony of the Paris agreement on 22 April 2016, and the Olympic Games.

Actions under strand two: Support implementation of the Paris Agreement, in the context of low-emission and climate resilient development.

- The EU and MS should work with partners to develop a full understanding of the content of INDCs, support partners in developing implementation plans, and make links to appropriate financial and technical support, in particular that provided mainly to Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States by the Global Climate Change Alliance + flagship. EU diplomatic services should be mobilised to encourage timely ratification.
- The EU and MS will further mainstream climate diplomacy through the concerted mobilization of their instruments of external action (including cooperation for development, neighbourhood and enlargement policies, civil protection and humanitarian policy, trade, etc.) to support ambitious climate action and strengthen resilience including through capacity building. This will include enhancing strategic collaboration with non-state actors in the context of the Lima-Paris Action Agenda.
- The EU and MS will continue to work together in exploring innovative mechanisms for mobilising additional climate finance from private investors. (For example the "Nordic finance initiative" launched by the countries of the Nordic Council at COP21.)
- COP22 in Marrakesh will be crucial for establishing practical details for implementing the Paris Agreement. An EU démarche in the run up to COP22 could explain EU views and seek support from partner countries on specific issues for Marrakesh.

Actions under strand three: Increase efforts to address the nexus between climate, natural resources, prosperity and stability.

- EU and MS will enhance their involvement in the climate and security policy debate at international fora, including the UN Security Council (encouraging the update of the 2009 paper by the SG), the Planetary Security Conference organised by the Netherlands, and other relevant conferences/initiatives organised by MS.
- The EU and those MS who are part of the G7 will continue engagement via the G7 on climate and fragility, acting on the findings of the G7 report on this subject.
- EU and MS will continue and enhance the inclusion of climate vulnerability analysis into fragility/security and disasters risk assessments and collaborate on the resulting risk-mitigation efforts, via all appropriate external policy instruments and in collaboration with established networks.
- The EU will continue its work under the joint EU-UNEP initiative and project on climate and security which specifically address the destabilizing effects of climate change in fragile states.
- The EU and Member States are encouraged to explore the possibility of developing a list of actions on climate & security.

