Report on the Commission White Paper: 'Adapting to climate change: towards a European framework for action'

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The Council adopted its conclusions on the follow-up to the Copenhagen Conference (7-19 December 2009). It evaluates the outcomes of the conference, and stresses the opportunities for immediate implementation offered by the Copenhagen Accord as well as confirms existing EU positions on a broad range of issues. The Council also requests that the Commission present an assessment of the comparability and adequacy of greenhouse gas emission reductions offered by third countries as well as an impact assessment of the EU's conditional move to a 30% emissions cut. It adopts the following conclusions on the Copengahen Conference:

- the Council recognises the importance of the positive outcomes of the Copenhagen Conference which reflect a political understanding on the long-term response to climate change, contain some provisions to implement rapid action, embody international solidarity and constitute a step in the continuing negotiations on a global legally-binding post-2012 agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It highlights the fact that the need to forge this agreement to combat climate change is becoming more urgent. The Council regrets that the **outcomes of the Copenhagen Conference did not reflect the EU's expectations** and ambitions, and stresses that they raised climate change to the highest level of government policy and mobilised public opinion in an unprecedented manner;
- it welcomes the decisions adopted in Copenhagen on the continuation of both AWG-KP and AWG-LCA tracks with a view to both tracks delivering the results of their work to the Cancún Climate Conference (29 November-10 December 2010). The Council underlines the need to integrate the political guidance given in the Copenhagen Accord in the negotiating texts;
- it stresses that it is crucial for the UNFCCC to deliver in time and expresses its openness to consider positively all proposals keeping the increase in global temperature below 2°C compared to the pre-industrial level so as to ensure that the work in both tracks results in a comprehensive global legal framework which preserves all the essential elements of the Kyoto Protocol. The Council stresses that **focused work should be conducted in order to increase the ambition level in the run-up to Cancún** and to provide all Parties and stakeholders with clear signals on the mitigation targets, actions and mechanisms as well as the common rules for fulfilling and implementing them;
- it welcomes the fact that **Parties accounting for over 80% of global greenhouse gas emissions** have associated themselves with or expressed support for the Copenhagen Accord. All Parties which have not yet done so are encouraged to associate themselves with the Accord as soon as possible and to provide information on the targets or actions that they will implement. The Council stresses the importance of starting with the immediate implementation of the Accord and the EU's determination to play a leading role in this respect;
- it emphasises its continued **full support to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** in deepening our understanding of climate change through its solid scientific assessments of climate change. It takes note of the fact that a limited number of inaccuracies have been reported, but is convinced that the IPCC offers the most authoritative and comprehensive assessment process on the existing science of climate change. The Council welcomes the initiatives to review the internal IPCC procedures for its future work;
- it also welcomes the recognition in the Copenhagen Accord of the **scientific view that the increase in global temperature should be kept below 2°C** compared to the pre-industrial level. The Council reiterates that, according to the IPCC, to stay below 2ºC requires that global greenhouse gas

emissions peak by 2020 at the latest and are reduced by at least 50% compared with 1990 by 2050 and continue to decline thereafter. Developed countries as a group should reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 80% to 95% by 2050 below 1990 levels, and in this context, the Council reaffirms its support for an EU objective to reduce emissions by 80-95% by 2050 compared to 1990 levels. It also reaffirms its October 2009 conclusions concerning emissions from international aviation and maritime transport;

- the Council calls on all Parties to begin to implement without delay their offers for 2020 emission reduction targets and nationally appropriate mitigation actions as communicated to the UNFCCC Secretariat and to reinforce their level of ambition in order to keep the 2°C objective within reach. It acknowledges that the current overall level of pledges needs to be increased;
- in the context of a global and comprehensive agreement, the Council underlines the importance of an assessment of the implementation of the Copenhagen Accord to be completed by 2015, including consideration of strengthening the long-term goal referencing various matters presented by science, **including in relation to temperature rises of 1.5ºC;**
- it reaffirmsthe EU's independent commitment to achieve a 20% reduction of greenhouse as emissions by 2020 compared to 1990 as well as the EU's **conditional offer to move to a 30% reduction by 2020** compared to 1990, as part of a global and comprehensive agreement for the period beyond 2012 and provided that other developed countries commit themselves to comparable emission reductions and that developing countries contribute adequately according to their responsibilities and respective capabilities;
- the Council considersthat there is a need for **an assessment of comparability of the quantified economy-wide emissions targets** of Annex I Parties for 2020, making use of a balanced combination of criteria such as those contained in its March 2009 conclusions, and of the adequacy of nationally appropriate mitigation actions by developing country Parties announced in the context of the Copenhagen Accord. It stresses that the analysis of comparability of commitments, actions and contributions will be conducted also using the 2°C objective as yardstick. The Council asks the Commission to work on this assessment, which should help to prepare the EU for a decision whether to step up to a 30% emissions reduction commitment;
- it invitesthe Commission to update by June 2010 the **impact assessment** for the EU and the Member States in view of the EU's conditional move to a 30% emissions reduction commitment; and takes note of the Commission's ongoing work on an EU low-emission development strategy;
- the Council recalls that the **risk of carbon leakage is a concern in certain sectors, such as energy-intensive industries** particularly exposed to international competition. This risk is addressed in the ETS Directive so that, to preserve the environmental integrity of the EU's policies, in light of the outcome of the international negotiations and the extent to which these lead to global greenhouse gas emission reductions, it is possible to consider appropriate measures to be taken in compliance with international trade rules. The Council stresses that an ambitious international agreement remains the best way of addressing this issue. It is looking forward to the Commission submitting by 30 June 2010 an analytical report, assessing the situation with regard to energy-intensive sectors that have been determined to be exposed to significant risks of carbon leakage, accompanied by any appropriate proposals. The Council recognises the need similarly to assess the impact on the Union's agriculture sector;
- **it recalls** that developed countries have committed themselves in the Copenhagen Accord to providing resources approaching USD 30 billion in the period 2010-2012, with a balanced allocation between adaptation and mitigation and with a special emphasis on vulnerable and least developed countries. The Council reaffirms the EU's and Member States' commitment to contribute EUR 2.4 billion annually over the period 2010-2012. It also recalls developed countries' commitment in the Copenhagen Accord to a goal of mobilising jointly USD 100 billion a year by 2020, coming from a wide variety of both public and private sources, to assist developing countries in fighting climate change;
- the Council welcomesthe establishment by the United Nations Secretary General of an **Advisory Group on Climate Change Financing**. The potential of innovative sources of finance and of market-based instruments, including carbon markets, should be taken into account. It stresses the

need to start a transparent process for establishing the basis for the Copenhagen Green Climate Fund;

- the Council recalls the **c**rucial importance of carbon markets, including cap-and-trade systems, for achieving global mitigation objectives in a cost-efficient manner and stresses that **cooperation on carbon market readiness should be strengthened**;
- it is determinedto make rapid progress to develop guidelines, rules or modalities for **REDD-plus** actions, and thus welcomes initiatives to mobilise financing as part of fast-start funding under the Copenhagen Accord and to facilitate decision-making on REDD-plus at the Cancún Climate Conference, including agreeing targets to reduce gross tropical deforestation by at least 50% by 2020 compared to current levels and to halt global forest cover loss by 2030 at the latest, as well as the necessary finance beyond the fast-start period in line with our overall commitment in the Copenhagen Accord;
- the Council emphasises theimportance of accelerating the development of environmentally safe and sustainable **low-carbon technologies** and welcomes the establishment of a Technology Mechanism designed to meet developing countries' needs on adaptation and mitigation, drawing on the technology action plans of the Major Economies Forum on Climate and Energy and the fruitful experiences within the EU. It calls for the allocation already in 2010 of resources as part of fast-start finance to actions related to such technologies, including possible pilot actions both on adaptation and mitigation.