Towards a new international climate agreement in Paris

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PURPOSE: to set out the blueprint for tackling global climate change beyond 2020 – the Paris Protocol.

BACKGROUND: according to the latest findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), without urgent action, climate change will bring severe, pervasive and irreversible impacts on all the world's people and ecosystems. Limiting dangerous rises in global average temperature to **below 2°C compared with pre-industrial levels** will require substantial and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by all countries.

This global transition to low emissions can be achieved without compromising growth and jobs, and can provide significant opportunities to revitalise economies in Europe and globally. Action to tackle climate change also brings significant benefits in terms of public well-being. Delaying this transition will, however, raise overall costs and narrow the options for effectively reducing emissions and preparing for the impacts of climate change.

All countries need to act urgently and collectively. Since 1994, the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) have focused on this challenge, resulting in more than 90 countries, both developed and developing, pledging to curb their emissions by 2020. However, these pledges are insufficient to achieve the below 2°C objective. For these reasons, in 2012, the UNFCCC Parties launched negotiations towards a new legally binding agreement applicable to all Parties that will put the world on track to achieve the below 2°C objective. **The 2015 Agreement is to be finalised in Paris in December 2015 and implemented from 2020**.

Possible agreement in Paris: the progress made at the recent climate conference in Lima brings a robust agreement in Paris within reach. A first full draft text of the 2015 Agreement was also developed, reflecting the positions of all Parties on all the elements under negotiation.

This communication responds to the decisions taken in Lima, and is a key element in implementing the Commission's priority of **building a resilient Energy Union**. This communication prepares the EU for the last round of negotiations before the Paris conference in December 2015.

CONTENT: in particular, this communication:

- translates the decision taken at the European Summit in October 2014 into the **EU's proposed emissions target** - its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) to be submitted by the end of the first quarter of 2015;
- proposes that all UNFCCC Parties submit their INDCs well in advance of the Paris conference. The EU, China, the US and other G20 countries, as well as high and middle income countries should be in a position to do so by the first quarter of 2015. Greater flexibility should be provided to Least Developed Countries (LDCs);
- sets out a vision for a transparent and **dynamic legally binding agreement**, containing fair and ambitious commitments from all Parties based on evolving global economic and geopolitical circumstances. In aggregate these commitments - based on scientific evidence - should put the world on track to reduce global emissions by **at least 60% below 2010 levels by 2050**. Should there

be a gap in the level of ambition set in Paris, this should be addressed by devising a work programme starting in 2016 working closely with the GCF to identify additional action to reduce emissions;

- proposes that the 2015 Agreement should be in the **form of a Protocol under the UNFCCC**. **Major economies, in particular the EU, China and the US, should show political leadership** by joining the Protocol as early as possible. It should enter into force as soon as countries with a collective total of 80% of current global emissions have ratified it. Under the new Protocol, climate finance, technology development and transfer, and capacity building should promote universal participation and facilitate the efficient and effective implementation of strategies to reduce emissions and adapt to the adverse effects of climate change;
- underlines that the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and the Montreal Protocol should act to effectively regulate emissions from international aviation and shipping and the production and consumption of fluorinated gases before the end of 2016;
- highlights how other EU policies such as, trade, scientific research, innovation and technological cooperation, economic and development cooperation, disaster risk reduction and environment could reinforce the EU's international climate policy; and
- is complemented by a **climate diplomacy action plan** jointly developed by the European External Action Service and the Commission. The action plan is aimed at scaling up EU outreach and building alliances with ambitious international partners in the run up to the Paris conference.

Next steps: the Commission will organise an **international conference** to improve mutual understanding of the range of INDCs and the adequacy of their collective ambition, and **facilitate an open exchange of views** prior to the Paris conference. This conference will aim to bring together partner countries, key experts from academia, think-tanks and international organisations and will take place by November 2015.

By mid-2015, the Commission will also start to **present legislative proposals** to implement the 2030 climate and energy framework to the European Parliament and the Council.

It will continue to mainstream climate change action into its economic and development cooperation; take initiatives to work closer together with Member States in the delivery of climate relevant development finance; and take better advantage of the openness of its scientific research and innovation programmes to support its international partners, assisting them in preparing to carry out their commitments under the new Protocol.

Against this background, the Commission invites the European Parliament and the Council to endorse the proposed approach as soon as possible.

Annex and working document: it should be noted that some aspects of this communication are set out in further detail in the accompanying Staff Working Document. An annexed table presents the EU 2030 target and intended nationally determined contribution which aims to achieve **at least 40% domestic reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in 2030**.