

## **Presidency Conclusions of the Second Eastern Partnership Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Change**

The Ministers for Environment and Climate Change of the EU Member States, the Ministers for Environment and Climate Change of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries, the EU Commissioner for Environment and the EU Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy met in Luxembourg on 9 October 2018 to review progress on jointly agreed goals and set priorities for cooperation on environmental and climate policies. They were joined by high-level officials from the European Commission, EU Member States, international organisations, international financial institutions and representatives of civil society.

The Presidency notes the following:

1. Ministers agreed to keep the protection of the environment and climate high on the political agenda and to further develop and implement their actions and policies in line with the goals set in the EaP Summit Declaration of 2017 and the Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Change of 2016 as well as the milestones and targets agreed in the "20 Deliverables for 2020" document and to deliver on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
2. Ministers also acknowledged the progress made by Eastern partners since 2016, in particular with policy planning, the ratification of the Paris Agreement and legislative changes and approximation, e.g. on water, air, green economy and environmental assessments.
3. They expressed concerns about continuous environmental degradation, increasing frequency and magnitude of extreme weather events, as well as the adequacy of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) necessary to achieve the objectives and long-term goals of the Paris Agreement. Noting the limited leverage of environmental policies and governance systems, they stressed the importance of further action to limit human exposure to negative environmental impacts.
4. At the same time, the Ministers reiterated the need for full compliance with international environmental and nuclear safety standards, recalled the need to strengthen environmental governance and monitoring, including through the effective implementation of Strategic Environmental Assessments, Environmental Impact Assessments and associated international agreements, enhance environmental institutions, promote environmentally friendly decision-making, and communicate strategically in order to promote environmental awareness and public participation in environmental matters.

5. In order to ensure coherence and enhance implementation, Ministers underlined the need to further support the mainstreaming of environment, climate change and sustainable development objectives into all policy areas and enhance cross-sector and inter-Ministerial cooperation. In particular, this requires mainstreaming into macroeconomic reforms in order to:
  - a. Pursue economic diversification based on green and circular economy policies and approaches, based on the hierarchy of sustainable waste management;
  - b. Ensure that the NDCs under the Paris Agreement are recognised as central planning documents and complemented by long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies, including with a 2050 horizon;
  - c. Promote sustainable financing, including at the local level, and improve fiscal and economic instruments to send clear price signals with a focus on air quality, water and waste management, cleaner production and reduced greenhouse gas emissions;
  - d. Enhance efforts to promote the transition to a more sustainable energy system, including through measures on energy efficiency;
  - e. Further promote sustainable procurement policies at all levels of governance;
  - f. Increase efforts to green industry, labour and education policies and unlock green jobs;
  - g. Further work towards reforming and removing environmentally harmful subsidies.
6. In relation to climate action, the Ministers highlighted the need to step up efforts, including mitigation and adaptation to climate change, enabling a resilient development of cities and local authorities, and enhancement of institutional capacities at national and regional level. They also underlined the need to set, in cooperation with public and private actors, clear priorities in national investment plans to further enable investments in climate-resilient solutions, including with support of the EU External Investment Plan, the high-level energy efficiency initiative involving the European Union and International Financing Institutions, and the Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership (E5P).
7. They emphasised the importance of adopting the Paris Agreement Work Programme at COP24 that preserves the spirit of the Paris Agreement and committed to mutually support common positions where appropriate.

8. Ministers reiterated the need to promote the transition towards a circular economy with a focus on reducing the use of plastics and raising levels of high-quality recycling, promoting the EU waste hierarchy in investment planning and implementation of projects, and further strengthening product policies towards resource and energy efficiency.
9. In addition, they recalled the need to protect the environment as a provider of a wide range of ecosystem services and the importance of ensuring the integrity of ecosystems and the protection of biodiversity. In this context, they highlighted the need to implement the Road Map for completing the Emerald Network of protected areas in the partner countries, to step up the fight against illegal activities affecting biodiversity and forests, to take action especially for particularly vulnerable and endemic species in the region, such as the sturgeon, and to work with forest-dependent communities to enable sustainable forest management to enhance resilience and contribute to economic growth.
10. In the context of preparations for the Convention on Biological Diversity COP14, they also stressed the need to step up efforts to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and work towards a strong post-2020 global biodiversity framework, which should include ambitious, realistic and, where possible, measurable and time-bound targets.
11. In regards to air quality management, Ministers highlighted the importance of an integrated approach with energy efficiency and climate change, the need to strengthen air pollution abatement efforts, the significance of the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air Initiative as a voluntary tool to achieve better air quality, and the need for substantial investments in all EaP countries to modernise air quality monitoring through automated stations.
12. Ministers also reaffirmed the commitment to cooperate with all relevant stakeholders, including civil society, local authorities and the Covenant of Mayors. They welcomed the new EU4Climate and EU4Environment programmes and committed themselves to actively engage in their effective implementation.

Finally, Ministers

13. Agreed to meet again in due course to assess progress on cooperation between the EU and EaP partners.