

## ETUC Resolution on the follow-up of the Paris agreement on climate change - ETUC views on COP 23

Adopted at the Executive Meeting of 25-26 October 2017

### **Don't lose Paris sense of urgency!**

The global average temperature recorded so far in 2017<sup>1</sup> clearly indicates that this year will follow the trends of 2015 and 2016 which were among the warmest years on record. The consequences of this quick global warming are more and more visible year after year. Heat waves, and the related events (droughts, water shortages, wild fires) are direct threats, among many other environmental-led challenges, for our planets and our communities. Even if they differ from one region to another, these consequences will first and foremost hit the most vulnerable. Climate change will also exacerbate conflicts and amplify migration whereas uncertainty and insecurity are already the hallmarks of the current period. All these converging warning messages confirm that delaying or weakening climate action is an assault against humankind and its future and is against all basic universal values that the trade union movement has been supporting in Europe and internationally.

This UNFCCC COP 23, which is located in Bonn but under the presidency of Fiji, a small developing country particularly vulnerable to the consequences of climate change, must pave the way towards the full implementation of the Paris Agreement. The ETUC has made a critical assessment of this agreement<sup>2</sup>. It is far from perfect but this is the main multilateral policy instrument we have to tackle climate change. Trying to re-open negotiations to weaken its bottom-up architecture based on voluntary national contributions is insane. Make it work!

### **Paris rule book must be a driver for increased ambition**

To that aim, parties must accelerate the negotiations of the rule book and ensure that the working arrangements it will contain allow full transparency on parties' concrete actions to fulfil their commitments (on mitigation, on adaptation and on provision of support to the most vulnerable countries). The Global Stocktake (GST) must deliver collective assessments that help Parties to identify gaps and next steps, at global, regional and national levels. GST must create space for Parties to exchange views about future collaboration and cooperative action but, above all, GST must send a strong signal to governments to increase ambition.

The content of the existing Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), in aggregate terms, will result in emissions levels in 2025 and 2030 higher than those consistent with a likely chance of limiting warming to well below 2°C or 1.5°C<sup>3</sup>. Without a strong increase of ambition, the carbon budget of a 2°C scenario will be almost depleted in 2030. The coming years are therefore absolutely crucial to bridging the gap between where we are currently heading (an increase of 2.7-3.7°C) and where we need to be pursuant to the Paris Agreement. By 2020, Parties are invited to either communicate a new NDC, or re-communicate or update their existing NDC. The Facilitative Dialogue in 2018 is a vital opportunity for Parties to enhance their ambition by 2020. It is also a good opportunity to show case the many benefits for climate action in terms of creating quality jobs, reducing poverty or improving air quality, just to mention a few.

<sup>1</sup> According to the US NOAA, if we continue on the path of previous months, 2017 would end up as the third warmest year (+0.87°C / +1.57°F) on record, behind 2016 (warmest) and 2015 (second warmest). See: <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/sotc/global/2017/08/supplemental/page-1>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.etuc.org/documents/etuc-declaration-about-paris-agreement-climate-change#.WdYJJmiCyUk>

<sup>3</sup> The UNEP Emission Gap Report 2016. See: <https://wedocs.unep.org/rest/bitstreams/47049/retrieve>

In that context, the ETUC supports the demand made by the European Parliament “to start work immediately on aligning its climate and energy targets with the agreed international goal of limiting the increase in global average temperature to below 2 °C, while pursuing efforts to limit that increase to 1,5 °C”<sup>4</sup>. The MFF post 2020 must be designed in that perspective<sup>5</sup>. The ETUC also demands that the EU use the Facilitative Dialogue 2018 as a forum to discuss how to operationalise climate action in a way that respects human rights, gender equality and take into account “the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs” as prescribed in the Paris Agreement.

### **Just transition deserves a policy framework and secured funding**

By referring to the imperatives of just transition and decent work in the preamble of the Paris Agreement, Parties endorsed a major political commitment. Politically, it obliges governments to implement a just transition for workers and to promote decent work in their policies to combat climate change. The ETUC therefore call parties to incorporate Just transition within their Nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and the related domestic policy instruments that countries are adopting. The adoption in 2015 of the "Guidelines for a just transition to environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all" by the International Labour Organization provides an internationally recognized reference for governments and social partners willing to make just transition a reality in their country. The ETUC urges the Commission and the EU Member States to learn from this document so that adequate social measures can accompany the policies against climate change. The ETUC notes with the greatest concern the absence of reference to the just transition principles in the position of the Council on the draft regulation for the Governance of the Energy Union. The ETUC stresses that an adequate labour chapter is crucial to make the decarbonisation socially just as well as to reach climate targets. The ETUC reiterates that the participation of the social partners in developing and implementing low carbon strategies is a necessary precondition to their success. Having templates for National plans for climate and energy, or Low carbon development strategies without a chapter on employment and labour issues would be a major pitfall for the EU climate policy framework.

The ETUC points out that a just transition presupposes active support for workers in sectors that will suffer from the transition to a low carbon economy. The ETUC reiterates its call to set up a fund for the just transition fed in the first place by revenues from auctioning a part of the EU ETS emission quotas and stresses that the social consequences of decarbonisation must be on the agenda of the discussion on the upcoming Multiannual Financial Framework. Moreover, the ETUC reiterates its demand for a 2050 Just transition roadmap that would structure and make more concrete the way the EU will deal with the social dimension of decarbonisation. The content of such a roadmap would require further work, in close cooperation with social partners, but the following elements should be seen as crucial building blocks: strong support for low-carbon innovation and investment to maintain and create quality jobs in the EU industries and related value chains, large-scale training initiatives to ensure the existence of a skilled workforce and to secure professional transitions, strong social protection systems, systematic worker’s participation. Moreover, the ETUC highlights that the industrial sectors (and energy intensive industries in particular) face specific challenges which should be tackled with the involvement of social partners.

A just transition also requires the root causes of energy poverty to be strongly tackled. As part of the “Right to energy coalition”, the ETUC will work to achieve more ambitious energy efficiency targets and an acceleration of the energy transition.

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<sup>4</sup> European Parliament resolution of 4 October 2017 on the 2017 UN Climate Change Conference in Bonn, Germany (COP23) (2017/2620(RSP))

<sup>5</sup> See ETUC Position on the Multiannual Financial Framework post 2020

Specific measures designed to tackle energy poverty throughout the European Commission's "2030 Clean Energy For All Europeans" legislative package must be strengthened, and it is crucial lower-income households are prioritised in renovation initiatives, with no additional costs in housing or bills, to ensure fairness, effectiveness, and support for the legislative package. Banning disconnection and ensuring affordable provision of a minimum quantity of electricity to cover basic needs of vulnerable consumers, are obvious priorities to tackle energy poverty.

### **Financing still needed!**

The ETUC takes note of the Roadmap to US\$100 Billion' for achieving the goal of mobilising USD 100 billion by 2020 for climate action in developing countries. Building upon the steady increase of its climate finance, the EU must continue efforts to increase its financial support to these countries beyond 2020 in accordance with Decision accompanying the Paris Agreement.

The ETUC joins the international trade union movement to call the Green Climate Fund to financially support Just transition projects, such as re-skilling programmes or mobility premium for workers that would be negatively impacted by decarbonisation in developing countries.