



A PARLIAMENTARY PLEA FOR RESOLUTE CLIMATE ACTION

***FROM THE BUREAU OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE ON
ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT***

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE 2021 UNITED NATIONS
CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE ([COP26](#))**

5 November 2021

INTRODUCTION

Dear leaders of the OSCE participating States,

We are facing an unprecedented climate emergency which is threatening our security. You are now called to take decisive action to mitigate and adapt to the crisis and protect our citizens.

As the UN Secretary General, António Guterres recently stressed, “we are on track for a catastrophic global temperature rise of around 2.7 degrees Celsius. Scientists are clear on the facts. Leaders need to be just as clear in their plans to avoid a climate catastrophe”¹.

Urgently responding to the climate crisis and its detrimental impact on our security, health and wealth has become an overarching priority of the international community as our countries seek to rebuild their economies, address growing development needs and enhance resilience against future shocks. With the unrestrainable expansion of world energetic, alimentary, and industrial consumptions, the need for well-informed, resolute and time-bound climate mitigation and adaptation strategies is greater than ever.

In the framework of our interparliamentary work intended to promote peace and co-operation among our 57 participating States, stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA) has placed the climate crisis at the core of its security agenda. Our *General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment* has been actively exploring the multifaceted impacts of climate change, environmental degradation and pollution on our citizens’ safety and wellbeing. The Committee’s 2021 [Report](#) emphasizes the correlations between climate change and global security² as it advocates for a more balanced development strategy to effectively address our civilization’s growing needs

¹ [UNEP Emissions Gap 2021 Report Press Conference, 26 October 2021](#)

² Inter alia, the report underscores the threat multiplier effect of the climate crisis that converges with other pressures and shocks to significantly jeopardize the stability of states and societies. [At the opening ceremony of COP26](#), Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi reiterated how climate change has serious repercussions on global peace and security: “It can deplete natural resources and aggravate social tensions. It can lead to new migratory flows and contribute to terrorism and organized crime. Climate change can divide us”. For more insights on the impact of climate change on security, please also note this [article](#).

while safeguarding our planet. Ultimately, there can be no politico-military, economic-environmental, or human security without climate security!

Thus, we must urgently redirect our co-operative efforts towards shaping a truly sustainable, carbon-neutral, development model in which environmental, economic, social and public health factors are duly factored in and given equal attention, as envisaged in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development³.

To achieve this goal - clearly entailing profound economic, social and cultural transformations in the coming decades - we will need strong political leadership, a common vision and a shared sense of responsibility. We will need to put short-sighted, partisan interests aside for the common good of our planet and all human beings living on it. We will need to utilize the best available science and accelerate innovation for an effective, long-term global response to climate change, a response which promotes economic growth and counters poverty. In effect, leaving no person behind.

In the wake of the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's report⁴, OSCE PA leaders underlined how the effects of human-influenced climate change are being felt through increased heat waves, droughts and floods in our region, thus urging decision-makers to act swiftly to protect citizens and prevent further harm to the environment. It is either "now, or never"⁵.

Therefore, **we reiterate our strong call for bold climate action** towards (1) drastic reductions in emissions of greenhouse gasses (hereinafter GHG), (2) development of effective adaptation strategies, (3) mobilization of the necessary financial resources and (4) international collaboration across the board.

Against this backdrop, the 26th Session of the Conference of Parties (COP26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) - convening in Glasgow (United Kingdom) from 31 October to 12 November 2021 - should represent a turning point for strengthened ambition in this regard.

³ [UN General Assembly, Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 21 October 2015](#)

⁴ [IPCC, 2021: Summary for Policymakers. In: Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#)

⁵ [OSCE PA Press Release](#) of 10 August 2021

PARLIAMENTARY PLEA FOR RESOLUTE CLIMATE ACTION

As leaders of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in the context of economic and environmental security, **we appeal to the Governments of our 57 participating States to address the climate crisis resolutely, coherently, and co-operatively**, in line with the spirit and letter of the Paris Agreement⁶. In doing so, we urge you to consider the following proposals in your climate efforts.

1. MITIGATION - Secure global net-zero carbon emissions by mid-century and keep 1.5 degrees⁷ within reach.

A combination of approaches in addressing sectors that emit most GHG⁸ - and improving overall transparency and public participation - can move us closer to our mid-century objective. Most mitigation measures are associated with clear co-benefits, including, but not limited to, new business opportunities, better environmental compliance, health benefits through better local air and water quality, better work conditions, and reduced waste⁹. While implementing diversified national mitigation measures, it will be critical to duly assess their ultimate environmental footprint and prevent potential short- and long-term shocks to our economies, labor markets and social relations, effectively leaving no citizen behind. Inter alia, you should consider:

- Committing to progressively more ambitious **emission reduction targets** through realistic Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), in line with capping temperature increases at 1.5 degrees. Most developed countries and the largest emitters shall lead by example in this field.
- As the energy power sector accounts for a quarter of global GHG emissions, boosting the **low-carbon energy transition**, promoting **energy efficiency**, and prioritizing **green energy technologies**, including by sharply reducing public subsidies to fossil fuels. While preventing energy and production bottlenecks, the

⁶ [Paris Agreement to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 12 December 2015](#)

⁷ According to Paris Agreement, holding the rise in global temperature well below 2 degrees and pursuing efforts to limit the increase by 1.5 degrees will significantly reduce risks and impacts of climate change. However, the window for achieving 1.5 degrees is rapidly closing, and with the current net-zero pledges the world will reach 2.7 degree rise by the end of the century.

⁸ According to the latest [IPCC report](#), the various sectors' global emissions are the following: Electricity and heat production - 25 %; Agriculture and other land use - 24 %; Buildings - 6.4 %; Industry - 21 %; Transport - 14 %; Other energy (non-electricity or heat production related) - 9.6 %.

⁹ [IPCC, 2014: Technical Summary. In: Climate Change 2014: Mitigation of Climate Change. Contribution of Working Group III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, p. 85](#)

transition should promote more resilient, diversified, accessible and affordable energy for all human needs.

- Prioritizing the **greening of our production and heating processes¹⁰, our transportation** networks¹¹, and promoting circular economy.
- Developing carbon-neutral policies related to **agriculture¹²** as well as **forest conservation and management¹³** in the common framework of mitigation and adaptation¹⁴. Engaging in **sustainable land use** is also critical for food security, rural development and the eradication of poverty.
- Critically revisiting our current **food systems and habits**, including food loss and waste¹⁵, as well as proactively ensuring the integrity of **ecosystems** and safeguarding **biodiversity**.
- Implementing a green transition which is fair and beneficial for workers, consumers, companies and states, including by safeguarding decent work conditions, promoting a more equitable access to natural resources and making our economies more resilient, innovative and competitive.
- To better inform consumption and production decisions, raising awareness of the consumers and businesses about climate change by promoting **eco-labelling and certification schemes** for products and technologies, as well as the collection and **disclosure of data** on GHG emissions by the largest polluters¹⁶.
- Adopting **stringent environmental and climate regulatory frameworks**, setting environmental performance standards, and establishing responsible institutions to ensure the implementation of such rules and regulations. For

¹⁰ According to the International Energy Agency, around 50% of the global final energy consumption is used for heating and cooling purposes ([article](#))

¹¹ With transport accounting for 14 % of global emissions, a shift to zero-emission vehicles is critical in bringing cleaner air to cities, reducing overall GHG emissions and safeguarding the health of our citizens.

¹² Developing policies for the transition of agricultural production towards a resilient, low carbon, agroecological, regenerative, and climate-smart practices is critical.

¹³ Promoting sustainable forest management is key to conserving existing carbon stocks, reducing deforestation and engaging in afforestation programs to increase carbon capture.

¹⁴ [Marrakesh Partnership for Global Climate Action, Climate Action Pathway on Land Use, Executive Summary, p. 4](#)

¹⁵ According to the Global Food Emissions Database, the world's food systems (from production to consumption) are responsible for more than one-third of global anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions ([article](#))

¹⁶ [IPCC, 2014: National and Sub-national Policies and Institutions. In: Climate Change 2014: Mitigation of Climate Change. Contribution of Working Group III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, p. 1156](#)

instance, by approving tighter air quality standards we would mitigate climate change and safeguard public health¹⁷.

2. ADAPTATION - Protect communities and natural habitats.

Adaptation planning and implementation are learning processes that require investment in knowledge and research, stakeholder engagement and mixed approaches at all levels¹⁸. To build resilience of infrastructures and decrease vulnerabilities of communities, you should consider:

- Enhancing **early warning systems** and improving **hazard mapping** by investing in data and information sharing.
- Implementing and improving **basic health measures**, such as providing clean water and sanitation, securing essential healthcare and increasing capacity for **disaster preparedness and response**¹⁹.
- While recognizing differentiated impacts of climate change on different regions and individuals, supporting a **community-based approach** focused on local communities' priorities, needs, knowledge, and capacities, to empower people to plan for and cope with the impacts of climate change. Inequality-driven impacts, including the differentiated needs of women and men as well as the elderly and children, low-income groups and people with disabilities, should be taken duly into account.
- Integrating **nature-based solutions**²⁰ into adaptation strategies by implementing sustainable management of natural resources and conservation

¹⁷ When addressing pollution, we can also address critical and easy to implement solutions to climate change. Although air pollutants include more than just greenhouse gases, there is a big overlap: changes in air pollution levels have immediate effects on climate.

¹⁸ [IPCC, 2014: Adaptation Planning and Implementation. In: Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, p. 871](#)

¹⁹ [IPCC, 2014: Technical Summary. In: Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, p. 71](#)

²⁰ Nature-based solutions are a collective term for actions that address climate change and benefit human well-being while supporting biodiversity. Some examples include managing or restoring river basins to provide resilient water storage, reduce erosion rates and regulate floods; restoring coastal habitats, like mangroves and wetlands, to protect against rising sea levels. As with engineered infrastructure interventions, nature-based solutions can also result in maladaptation, which is why it is critical to assess risks and benefits of all available adaptation options.

and restoration of ecosystems that considers social, economic and cultural co-benefits for local communities²¹.

3. FINANCE - Mobilize funds for adaptation and mitigation measures.

To achieve our mid-century goals, it is pivotal to scale up the level of financial flows from the public, private and not-for-profit sectors towards sustainable development priorities. For example, well-regulated “green finance” should channel private investments towards those economic initiatives that better manage environmental and social risks, while ensuring positive returns for the investors (win-win situation), thus turning billions of public investments into trillions of total climate investment. Inter alia, you should consider:

- Meeting existing commitments and coming forward with ambitious post-2020 **climate finance pledges**, to achieve and surpass the \$100 billion a year goal in support of complementary developing countries’ efforts.
- Supporting **multilateral climate funds** and financial mechanisms that serve the Paris Agreement goals and, as such, are key elements of the international climate finance architecture.
- Introducing well-calibrated **carbon taxes, effective emission trading systems**, and subsidies for low carbon industries and agriculture²².
- Mobilizing and redirecting **private financial flows** towards climate action by implementing incentives to support lending and investment into green projects and risk-sharing by the public sector²³, including through the adoption of appropriate regulatory frameworks²⁴. Ultimately, private finance should help companies realign their business models for net-zero emissions.

²¹ [IPCC, 2014: Cross-Chapter Boxes, Ecosystem-Based Approaches to Adaptation— Emerging Opportunities. In: Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, p. 119](#)

²² It is imperative to internalize the environmental externalities and promote standardized tools to measure the final production value of companies (including their environmental impact).

²³ [Encouraging and Rewarding Sustainability. Accelerating sustainable finance in the banking sector, European Banking Federation, p. 7](#)

²⁴ In this regard, the European Union is the frontrunner with its EU Green Taxonomy Regulation that lays out classification system for sustainable economic activities with the aim of directing investors’, businesses’ and policymakers’ choices towards economic growth without adverse environmental and climate impacts ([article](#))

- Developing **contingency funding plans** to prepare for the increased frequency of climate-related shocks to the economy²⁵.
- Utilizing information and analysis on climate risk to incentivize **adaptation and resilience investment**, such as creating linkages between highly vulnerable communities and locations with the establishment of innovative financial mechanisms and approaches²⁶.

4. CO-OPERATION - Working together to deliver.

Climate change is a global problem that cannot be addressed without international co-operation and co-ordination among local, national, and international stakeholders and policymakers. At the OSCE PA, we made co-operative dialogue our key instrument to promote comprehensive security, and we encourage every Government on the planet to do the same. In this context, you should consider:

- Actively engaging in **bilateral and multilateral co-operation** efforts aimed at leaving no country behind as we will only be as strong as our weakest link in the chain in addressing this crisis. While no population should be denied the benefits of economic growth and industrialization, all countries should co-operate in the implementation of the agreed commitments in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances.
- Fostering the regular **exchange of know-how** pertaining to the legislative, economic, financial, and social measures required to shift towards a carbon-neutral society.
- Enhancing collaboration intended to harness the opportunities offered by the **digital revolution** and **technological innovation** and **facilitating access to technology** to support the green transition and ensure justice and inclusiveness²⁷.

²⁵ [Driving Finance Today for the Climate Resilient Society, Global Commission on Adaptation, p. 50](#)

²⁶ Ibid, p. 57

²⁷ For instance, technological innovation can improve energy efficiency and boost early warning systems, thereby leading to a reduction in energy consumption and better crisis preparedness. Similarly, the digital revolution can improve transparency and citizens' engagement.

- Advancing **inter-disciplinary and inter-generational knowledge-sharing** to better inform and build critical public support for our future joint actions²⁸.
- Promoting the constructive contribution of **all segments of our societies** through education, training, public awareness, public participation, public access to information and co-operation at all levels.

CONCLUSION

Dear leaders of the OSCE participating States,

As elected representatives of the citizens, **parliamentarians are also eager to play a prominent role** in responding to the climate crisis.

At the national level, we bear the primary responsibility to adopt fair legislation and mobilize adequate resources to implement the Paris Agreement commitments, thereby safeguarding our planet's ecosystems, slowing the rate of increase in average global temperature, and adapting to the immediate impact of climate change on our communities.

Moreover, we are called to actively follow-up with our respective Governments to ensure that climate goals are consistently being met in the interest of all, thus leaving nobody behind in the complex socio-economic transition which this process entails. As bridges between citizens and their institutions, we realize that our contribution is more critical than ever in promoting public participation and support for resolute climate action.

In addition, we shall actively engage at the international level. The **OSCE PA will continue to serve as an important platform** for sharing lessons learned and as a catalyst for co-operative efforts in the implementation of our climate goals.

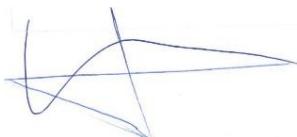
Representing over 1 billion citizens, our 323 parliamentarians can spur change and enhance security at all levels. To promote comprehensive security, it is critical to duly synergize our efforts towards, climate change, environmental pollution, public health, economic development and technology. This can be achieved through timely

²⁸ As science and research play a prominent role in the pursuit of net-zero development, we should aim for a beneficial partnership whereby science informs policymaking, and policymakers act following access to clear information and scientific evidence.

policy exchanges, forward-looking proposals, targeted campaigns, and greater engagement with the scientific community.

In conclusion, we shall champion holistic and ambitious approaches to environmental and climate security with the **aim to achieve a more balanced and forward-looking development strategy in response to the security needs of current and future generations.**

We are facing a landmark moment in modern history, and should be up to the job!



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