

## **Questions and answers on the EU-China Joint Statement on Climate Change (29 June 2015)**

### **1. Why is today's EU-China Joint Statement on Climate Change important?**

The statement is an important step towards a new international climate change agreement, to be adopted at the Paris conference in December 2015. The EU and China are major players in the context of the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC). While their interests are not always the same, today both sides agreed on the need for an 'ambitious and legally binding' agreement.

Furthermore, China acknowledges the likely need 'to increase ambition over time'. This means in practice that in case the Paris agreement is not sufficient to keep the global average temperature rise below 2 degrees Celsius, further national efforts will be necessary before and after 2020, the year the new agreement will enter into force.

On climate finance, China and the EU 'recognise complementary support by other countries'. This essentially refers to South-South cooperation between emerging markets and developing countries, a relatively new concept in international climate negotiations.

In addition to this common language on the Paris agreement, today's statement also contains important new content on low-carbon development and on strengthening bilateral EU-China climate cooperation (see below).

### **2. In November 2014, Presidents Obama and Xi adopted an ambitious US-China Joint Announcement on Climate Change. Does today's EU-China climate statement go beyond it?**

Last year's US-China announcement was a milestone, as China agreed for the first time to peak the absolute amount of its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 'around 2030 and to make best efforts to peak early'. But most scientists agree that more will be needed to limit global warming to below 2 degrees above pre-industrial times. Besides the exact year of the Chinese emissions peak, the level of emissions and how quickly they will fall after the peak will be important.

In today's statement, China and the EU agree to 'embark on low-carbon development' and 'cooperate on developing a cost-effective low-carbon economy'. The two sides will also 'explore opportunities to work together on low carbon investments'. The repeated emphasis on low-carbon economy, low-carbon development and low-carbon investments is new in this form. It is a serious commitment from both sides to move away from the resource-inefficient pathways of the last decades, and sends out a strong signal to investors and other stakeholders.

China has already implemented ambitious energy efficiency, renewable energy and environment programmes in the framework of its 11th and 12th Five-Year Plans (2006-2010 and 2011-2015, respectively). It is expected that these will be reinforced in the 13th Five-Year Plan, 2016-2020. On the EU side, low-carbon development is fostered through the 2020 and 2030 climate and energy packages, as well as the 2050 climate roadmap.

In conclusion, the US-China and the EU-China climate statements are not in competition but reinforce each other on important short-, medium- and long-term aspects.

### **3. How does the EU cooperate with China on climate change?**

The EU and China have a long-standing cooperation on climate change in the form of a regular Bilateral Cooperation Mechanism. The EU has an important role in supporting China on the introduction of a nationwide emissions trading system that will be operational by 2020. In today's statement, both sides decided to broaden the on-going cooperation on carbon markets.

The EU and China also work together on Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS), sustainable cities, climate-related scientific research, and several other climate-relevant environment and energy issues. Today's statement lists other areas for reinforced cooperation, such as aviation, maritime transport and hydrofluorocarbons (HFC). Moreover, activities at EU level are complemented by strong climate cooperation between EU Member States and China.

### **4. What about the Chinese INDC?**

On several occasions, the Chinese leadership announced its intention to submit its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) to the Paris agreement to the UNFCCC Secretariat in the first half of 2015. It is expected that the timing of this submission will coincide with the 17th EU-China Summit.

### **5. How much CO<sub>2</sub> are China and the EU emitting?**

According to the *Trends in Global CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions 2014 Report* by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre and the PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, in 2013 China emitted 10.3 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>, while the EU28 emitted 3.7 billion tonnes. In comparison, the US stood at 5.3 billion tonnes in the same year. Total global emissions were calculated at around 35 billion tonnes for 2013.