BRIEFING

Towards climate neutrality

European Parliament

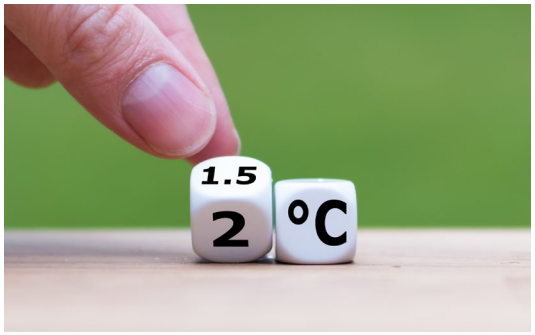
The Paris Agreement 10 years on

SUMMARY

In the 10 years since the adoption of the Paris Agreement, the Parties to the agreement have achieved a lot of progress in response to climate change. A Loss and Damage Fund was established in 2022. Rules for international carbon trading have been established under Article 6 of the agreement. A new goal for climate finance was agreed in 2024. The COP30 climate conference in November 2025 adopted indicators for climate adaptation and agreed to triple adaptation finance.

The first global stocktake under the Paris Agreement in 2023 called for accelerating climate action, tripling renewable energy capacity, doubling the rate of energy efficiency improvements and transitioning away from fossil fuels. Building on the global stocktake, Parties submitted their third round of climate pledges in 2025, ahead of COP30. Full implementation of the pledges would lead to a global temperature increase of around 2.4°C, a large improvement compared to the 3.5°C increase projected before the Paris Agreement but still falling short of the agreement's target to keep global warming well below 2°C and ideally 1.5°C. With global carbon emissions still rising, the 1.5°C target will only be achievable after a temporary overshoot. As every fraction of a degree of global warming will result in increasing damages, additional efforts will be needed to keep the overshoot as short and as close to 1.5°C as possible.

The current geopolitical situation hinders swift progress on collective climate action. The United States has decided to leave the Paris Agreement, a third of the Paris Agreement Parties failed to update their climate pledge, and a roadmap for phasing out fossil fuels was blocked at COP30. The EU, traditionally a leader in international climate policy, struggled to build strong coalitions to drive an ambitious outcome at COP30.



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Authors: Gregor Erbach and Liselotte Jensen

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The Paris Agreement

On 12 December 2015, at the end of the 21st conference of Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the delegates adopted the Paris Agreement. From January 2026, when the withdrawal of the United States (US) takes effect, the Agreement will have 194 Parties. The Paris Agreement was designed to cover all countries to 'strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change'. It builds on the concept of 'common but differentiated responsibilities' and has three goals, defined in Article 2.

- Holding the increase in the **global average temperature** to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C.
- Increasing **adaptation capacity and climate resilience** and low greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions development without jeopardising food security.
- Making **finance flows** consistent with low GHG emission and climate-resilient development pathways.

Article 3 of the Agreement dictates that all Parties must develop and communicate nationally determined contributions (NDC) to help achieve the overall goals. The first round of NDCs under the Paris Agreement were due in 2020 and have five-yearly update requirements. A Party can choose to update its NDC at any given time and an update must always be a progression from the previous NDC to ensure an increase of ambition in the global response to climate change. The annual UNFCCC COP also serves as the meeting of Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA). In 2021, at COP26, the CMA adopted the decision that Parties' five-yearly NDCs should be prepared with a ten-year horizon. Following Parties' submission of their NDCs, the UNFCCC secretariat prepares an NDC synthesis report ahead of the COP to provide information on progress towards the goals.

Various means of climate action are covered in articles 4 to 8, covering mitigation (Article 4), sinks and reservoirs (Article 5), voluntary cooperation (Article 6), adaptation (Article 7) and loss and damage (Article 8). Articles 9 to 11 provide for different types of support, including climate finance (Article 9), technology (Article 10) and capacity building (Article 11). Articles 12 to 15 cover other actions that will enhance the global response and functioning of the agreement, including education, training and public awareness and public access to information (Article 12), provisions to ensure and increase transparency (Article 13), global stocktakes (Article 14) and establishment of an expert committee to facilitate implementation and promote compliance (Article 15). Articles 16 to 29 cover the rules concerning meetings, ratification and withdrawal, as well as the depositary.

Beyond the annual synthesis reports, the Paris Agreement incorporates five-yearly global stocktakes (GST), to review collective progress towards the purpose of the agreement.

The road to Paris

In 1979, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) held its first World Climate Conference. The event boosted scientific collaboration and eventually led to the establishment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 1988. The IPCC delivered its first assessment report in time for the Second World Climate Conference in 1990, which adopted a Ministerial Declaration as the key outcome. Concurrently, linked to rising concerns over the state of the environment and global development, the UN General Assembly established the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1983, with a mandate to formulate a global agenda for change. The report 'Our Common Future', published in 1987, calls for global cooperative action to address

the human impact on the environment and for a long-term environmental strategy integrating environmental, economic and social objectives to achieve sustainable development. The report led to a 1987 UN resolution 'emphasizing the need for a new approach to economic growth, as an essential prerequisite for eradication of poverty and for enhancing the resource base on which present and future generations depend'. In 1988, the UN General Assembly endorsed the establishment of the IPCC.

In June 1990, the European Community, through the European Council, acknowledging the scientific consensus on climate change, adopted its position to promote the early adoption of a climate convention. Preparations were under way for the 1992 Rio de Janeiro 'Earth summit', as decided by the UN General Assembly. The Ministerial Declaration, mentioned above, gave a further boost to the UN decision to establish the UNFCCC, which was opened for signature at the Earth Summit. For further details see 'Annex 1: Milestones in EU and international climate policy'.

The first emissions reduction commitments

The UNFCCC has universal membership, with 198 Parties. Its objective is the 'stabilisation of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system'. Parties to the convention adopted the Kyoto Protocol at COP3 in 1997. It committed Annex I countries (developed countries and economies in transition, as defined under the UNFCCC in 1992) to collectively deliver, by 2012, quantified GHG emissions reductions of 5.2 %, compared to 1990. Parties agreed several market-based mechanisms to facilitate emissions reductions, including the clean development mechanism (CDM), joint implementation (JI) and an emissions trading system. In the EU, from 2013 to 2020, operators covered by the EU emissions trading system (ETS) could offset 4.5 % of their certified emissions with these international credits. From 2020, it was decided to stop this practice due to concerns about integrity and over-crediting. The Adaptation Fund was set up by the Kyoto Protocol, funded by a share of the proceeds from the mechanisms.

Under the first commitment period from 2005 to 2012, the EU committed to delivering an 8 % emissions reduction. The Kyoto Protocol was extended with a second commitment period from 2013 to 2020, under which the EU also made a joint commitment. Unfortunately, during the first commitment period the United States, at the time the number one emitter, never ratified the Protocol and Canada withdrew from the Protocol in 2012. In addition to these two countries, Russia and Japan did not participate in the second period.

From the Kyoto Protocol to the Paris Agreement

Despite emissions reductions achieved in the countries ratifying their commitments, developments across a number of emerging economies meant that global emissions continued to rise. In 2007, at the G8 summit, leaders issued a statement calling on all Parties to work towards a post-Kyoto agreement covering all major emitters. The next COP (COP13) adopted the Bali Road Map, with a view to reaching a new agreement two years later at COP15. This timeline proved too ambitious.

The COP15 Copenhagen Accord was a non-binding agreement, under which countries, also beyond those covered by Annex I, were encouraged to submit emissions reduction targets. The text recognised the need to make deep emissions cuts and the scientific view that global warming should be kept below 2°C. It put an emphasis on technology transfer, capacity building and adaptation, especially for the most vulnerable developing countries, and agreed the first quantified climate

finance goals, including the commitment by developed countries to raise US$100 billion annually by 2020, to support climate action in developing countries.

Observers argue that the turning point towards the Paris Agreement came with the Durban outcome at COP17, with the goal of delivering a new legal framework in 2015. The following COPs worked towards this goal, including the novel concept decided at COP19 to call on all parties to submit, before COP21, their *intended* Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs). This would allow the COP to assess ambition towards the scientifically recommended temperature goals. COP20 in Lima specified what should be included in an INDC and provided a draft negotiation text towards COP21.

In the run-up to COP21, Parties submitted their INDCs, and had submitted 184 INDCs by the end of November 2015. As the agreement was meant to cover the post-2020 period, negotiators agreed on the 'ratchet mechanism' so that each successive NDC demonstrates an increase of ambition.

The European Union institutions all adopted positions for the negotiations ahead of COP21.

COP21 ran from 30 November to 12 December 2015 and gathered over 150 heads of state or government. They adopted a comprehensive framework for international climate action, 'the Paris Agreement', which covered 29 articles and was attached as an annex to the COP21 Decision.

State of the climate challenge today

Research on the climate system, as well as anthropogenic interference, and its links to the broader earth systems, is undertaken continuously by thousands of experts and researchers at various levels of research and industry. The body of knowledge is ever-evolving, as is our understanding of the earth systems and feedback loops which interact with climate change. This vast body of knowledge needs to be assessed to establish the state of knowledge and latest scientific consensus, as well as the scientific integrity of the research behind the consensus. Performing such assessments also provides insights into gaps in knowledge where further research is warranted. This is the role of the IPCC organisation.

Since its establishment, the IPCC has provided consecutive assessment reports (AR) at intervals of five to seven years. From the third report (AR3) in 2001, they include four separate publications: the physical science basis; impacts, adaptation and vulnerability; mitigation of climate change; and the synthesis report. The sixth and latest (AR6) was published from 2021 to 2023, ahead of the first GST under the Paris Agreement. The next is planned for publication in 2027, ahead of the next GST.

The IPCC does not conduct its own research but provides climate information to assist policymakers based on the extensive assessment of primarily peer-reviewed scientific publications. For the latest report, 66 000 sources are cited. The preparation of the reports takes time, including nomination of experts, lead authors and reviewers to ensure the integrity of the findings and final approval by the working group for the specific publication. They are then accepted by the Panel (representatives of the member countries). The summary for policymakers (SPM) undergoes a further step of line-by-line approval by the Panel in collaboration with the experts of the working group, the aim being to ensure consensus on the messaging and main conclusions, while not veering away from scientific evidence. The IPCC reports present their findings using scales of confidence and likelihood. For likelihood, it applies a quantitative approach (see Table 1). For confidence, it evaluates levels of agreement and type, amount, quality and consistency of evidence. Based on this, it develops a 3x3 confidence assessment matrix with a Y-axis of high, medium and low agreement and an X-axis noting limited, medium or robust evidence.

Table 1 – IPCC Likelihood scale

Term	Likelihood of the outcome
Virtually certain	99–100 % probability
Very likely	90–100 % probability
Likely	66–100 % probability
About as likely as not	33–66 % probability
Unlikely	0–33 % probability
Very unlikely	0–10 % probability
Exceptionally unlikely	0–1 % probability

Source: 2010 guidance note, IPCC.

With each AR, the IPCC has increased its certainty, based on scientific consensus on the state and speed of climate change as well as predictions of future climate scenarios linked to GHG emissions. In the AR6, it concluded that: 'It is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean and land. Widespread and rapid changes in the atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere and biosphere have occurred.' The IPCC also underlined the near-linear relationship between global warming and CO_2 emissions, allowing for estimations of the remaining global carbon budget to stay within the temperature targets of the Paris Agreement.

While climate change impacts have high regional variability, the AR6 concluded that weather extremes would increase in frequency and intensity with additional global warming. The physical science basis report further highlighted the irreversible changes, in particular for oceans, ice sheets and global sea level, and gave estimations of the scale of change resulting from future emissions levels. It also included a tipping point overview table. The SPM of the AR6 synthesis report provides headline statements across the three thematic reports.

Other organisations provide targeted annual research which also supports insights into the state of the climate challenge today. The State of the Global Climate report gathers observations and monitoring of the climate system across its five major components, which include the atmosphere, the hydrosphere (oceans, lakes, and rivers), the cryosphere (ice and snow), the lithosphere (land surface), and the biosphere (living organisms). Research on interactions between these components raises understanding of the climate and what drives changes to it, in turn increasing the capacity of climate models to predict our future climate. Generally published during the first quarter of the year following the year in focus, in recent years the WMO have also published a COP-special state of the climate update, most recently on 6 November 2025. The latest report underlined the continued increase of atmospheric concentration of key GHGs during 2025, continued ocean warming, a continuous below-average Antarctic sea-ice extent from January–August 2025, and the lowest annual maximum in satellite record for the Arctic in March 2025. Following the record-breaking global mean surface temperature (GMST) of 2024, it estimates that 2025 will likely be the second or third warmest year on record. It noted that the past 11 years have been the warmest since observations began.

Another key reference is the UNEP Emission Gap Report (EGR), which looks at the response to the climate challenge. Published ahead of each COP, the EGR analyses the latest climate pledges to assess future emissions levels and performs a science-based assessment of the remaining gap to keep global warming well below 2°C and closer to 1.5°C. UNEP has published the report since 2010.

The 2025 UNEP EGR analysed existing and 60 submitted or announced updated NDCs submitted by 30 September 2025. The new NDCs covered 63 % of global emissions. Taking the new pledges into account and assuming full implementation, the report concludes a trajectory towards 2.3–2.5°C global warming before 2100. Based on current policies, 2.8°C is expected.

Advances in global climate action since Paris

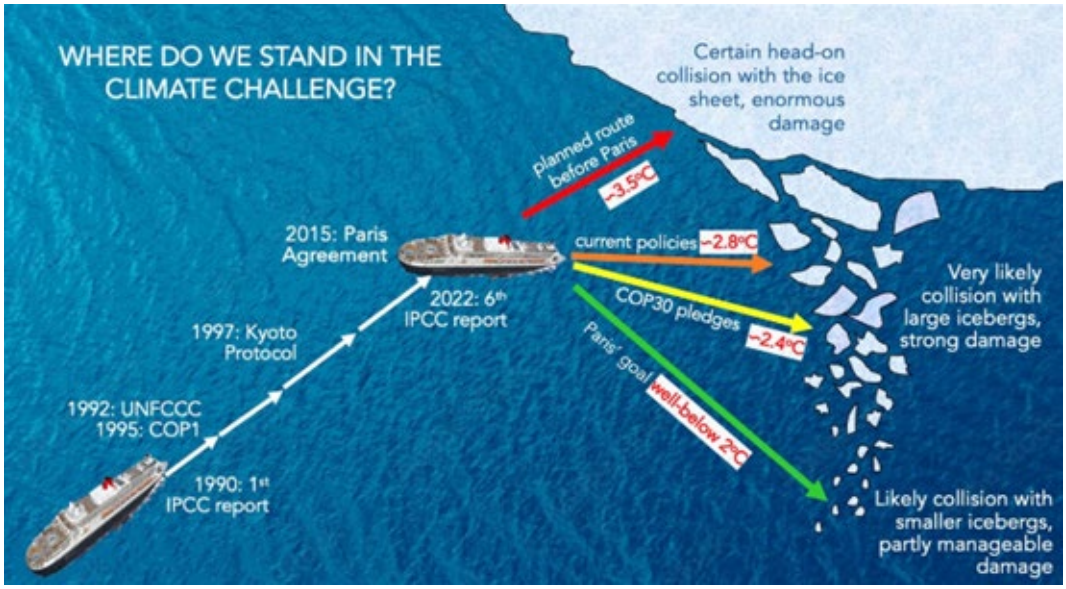
Despite the level of attention paid to the issue of climate change from the late 1970s to today, global GHG emissions continue to rise. The decade from 2010–2019 had the highest average annual global emissions, according to the AR6. However, the rate of growth was less than the decade before.

Neither the pre-Paris INDCs nor the 2021 NDCs contained sufficient ambition to deliver on the goals of the Paris Agreement. They did, however, demonstrate progress in ambition between 2016–2021. The 2018 IPCC special report on Global Warming of 1.5°C (SR1.5) focused on the impacts and emissions pathways related to the lower temperature increase, and helped focus multilateral discussions towards this objective. The 2023 first GST outcome still underscored the need to raise ambitions and speed up implementation of climate action to keep the temperature goals in reach. At COP28, Parties agreed to align their third round of NDCs (NDC3.0) to the GST outcome. However, various observers have criticised the NDC3.0 received before COP30 for also falling short on that promise.

UNEP today considers the 1.5°C overshoot to be inevitable before 2035. It notes that, to keep this overshoot temporary, efforts must increase. They highlight that countries are off-target regarding their 2030 pledges and that the combined NDC3.0 by the end of September 2025 would reduce 2035 global emissions by 15 %, whereas a reduction of 55 %, followed by climate neutrality and net negative emissions in the second half of the century, would be needed to reach 1.5°C. Key elements of major economies' NDCs are found in Annex 2 to this briefing.

While NDC pledges are still insufficient and implementation so far is not going fast enough to deliver on the pledges, it is still clear that the estimates of GMST by 2100 keep decreasing (see visual below). Each decrease in temperature reduces the scale of climate change and expected loss and damage.

Figure 1 – Illustration of progress in the multilateral process for climate action



Source: Visual by Giacomo Grassi, Joint Research Centre, European Commission.

Key achievements

While the Paris Agreement set the overall ambition, objectives and defined core areas of implementation and action, the rulebook for implementing the articles has been developed in the COPs following COP21. The first meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement took place at COP22 in Marrakech, Morocco, just after ratification of the Paris Agreement. At **COP24**, the Katowice climate package of work programmes to operationalise the agreement was adopted. At **COP25** in Madrid, the Parties established the Santiago Network under the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage (WIM) agreed at COP13. The network aims to catalyse the expertise and knowledge of experts and organisations participating in WIM to respond to the demand in developing countries to avert, minimise and address loss and damage (L&D).

Planned for 2020, **COP26** was postponed to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. By 2021, developed countries were still short on reaching their US$100 billion climate finance pledge, putting pressure on the negotiations. The main outcome of COP26 was finalising the Paris Agreement rulebook, in particular concerning transparency and reporting, and Article 6. The Parties also agreed work programmes on the global goal on adaptation and a new collective quantified goal on climate finance. The 'Glasgow Dialogue' on funding for L&D was launched, while the cover decision (Glasgow Climate Pact) addressed the need to increase mitigation efforts and strengthen resilience and called, for the first time, to 'phase down' unabated coal power and inefficient fossil fuels subsidies.

The Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD) was agreed at **COP27** in 2022. It will support vulnerable countries heavily impacted by climate disasters. At **COP28** in Dubai, the GST outcome and call for parties to align their NDC3.0 to it was the central outcome. However, it also remains the only COP decision to include a call for Parties to contribute by 'transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems'. COP28 operationalised the COP27 FRLD.

At **COP29** in Baku, Azerbaijan in 2024 – nicknamed 'the finance COP' – Parties agreed on a new collective quantified goal (NCQG) on climate finance of at least US$300 billion annually by 2035 to support climate action in developing countries. The Parties also reached agreement on standards and other outstanding issues, paving the way for full operationalisation of Article 6 carbon markets. Article 6 allows for voluntary cooperation between Parties to deliver on their NDCs. This includes credit transfers of emission reductions or removals achieved in one country to be credited to another. Negotiations have, due to their technical nature, been among some of the longest since COP21. During the process, criticisms have been voiced due to the transfer of CDM credits, which as mentioned above were considered over-credited and with low integrity. The Paris Agreement Crediting Mechanism (PACM) will facilitate global trading of international carbon credits; the EU intends to include the possibility of using credits towards its soon-to-be-adopted 2040 climate target.

On the COP30 Action Agenda, which defines topics on which the **COP30** presidency will seek to mobilise action, Brazil included some controversial topics. These included a roadmap to transition away from fossil fuels and, as the self-proclaimed 'COP of truth', information integrity on climate change. With a joint declaration launched during COP30, as part of the Global Initiative For Information Integrity on Climate Change, the issue of disinformation hindering climate action received significant attention. The fossil fuel exit roadmap was less successful, with the ambition of more than 80 Parties, including the EU, to mention in the conference decisions the need to transition away from fossil fuels, ultimately failing.

Deforestation is a recurring topic of climate negotiations due to the carbon sink function of forests. Brazil has long argued for funding to protect tropical forests, and launched the Tropical Forests Forever Facility at COP30. A key COP30 outcome, beyond specific mechanisms to increase ambition and align NDCs to the GST, was the decision to triple adaptation finance under the NCQG along with the adoption of indicators to implement the global goal on adaptation.

With Parties' submitting NDCs continuously ahead of COP30, the UNFCCC secretariat published a synthesis update on 10 November, covering 69 % of 2019 global emissions. It noted an expected 12 % decrease in global emissions by 2035, compared to 2019, still far short of what is needed to deliver on the temperature objectives (-55 %). Indicating an unavoidable overshoot scenario, it also increases the need for carbon dioxide removal (CDR) technologies, as noted by the IPCC.

Pressure points and challenges to overcome

Realising the full potential of the Paris Agreement

As the preceding section has shown, the COPs have made significant progress on various fronts since the adoption of the Paris Agreement. Notable strengths of the Paris Agreement include:

- **Universal participation:** The Paris Agreement is the first agreement that requires **all** Parties to take action against climate change, by submitting and implementing NDCs and by transparent reporting and review.
- **Dynamism towards climate neutrality:** Through long-term strategies, five-yearly NDCs and global stocktakes, the Paris Agreement has a dynamic mechanism to increase ambition over time, with the ultimate aim of reaching climate neutrality in the second half of this century.
- The adopted framework for implementing **Article 6** of the Paris Agreement creates the foundation for a global carbon market and for bilateral cooperation. Such international cooperation can be an important source of climate finance for developing countries. The EU played a key role in ensuring that the rulebook avoids double counting and ensures environmental integrity. In the 2030s, the EU may become a major player in this market by using international credits to achieve up to 5 % of its 2040 emissions reduction target.
- The **1.5°C target** was brought into the Paris Agreement by the EU and other partners in a high-ambition coalition. It led to the landmark IPCC special report on Global Warming of 1.5°C, which, for the first time, outlined systematically the high risks that come with exceeding 1.5°C. Consequently, a fair contribution to the 1.5°C target has become the yardstick against which national contributions are measured. The European Advisory Board on Climate Change used the 1.5°C target as the basis for its recommendation of a 90 % emissions reduction target for 2040 for the EU, compared to 1990.

Yet, there is growing frustration with the fact that global GHG emissions have continued to increase since the agreement was adopted, to a point where an overshoot of the 1.5°C target has become unavoidable. Critics blame this situation on the voluntary nature of NDCs, which does not ensure that national pledges collectively respect the global carbon budget. They also note a lack of enforcement to ensure proper implementation of the NDCs and even of procedural obligations like the timely submission of NDCs to the UNFCCC secretariat. However, in light of the diverging

interests of the Parties, it is unlikely that a fundamental reform of the UNFCCC or the Paris Agreement could be achieved that overcomes these obstacles.

The **courts** play a growing role in aligning national climate policies with the targets of the Paris Agreement, and enforcing its implementation at national level. In July 2025, the International Court of Justice delivered a landmark advisory opinion on the obligation of states in respect of climate change, describing climate change as an existential threat and clarifying states' obligations under the Paris Agreement. The advisory opinion can form the basis of litigation to strengthen climate action at national level. The Paris Agreement, in combination with human rights considerations, has been used in climate litigation cases in national courts and the European Court of Human Rights.

Geopolitical fragmentation

As seen above, the Paris Agreement has failed to achieve emissions reductions that are aligned with its headline target. The adoption of an ambitious climate agreement in 2015 was driven by the willingness of China and the United States, the top GHG emitters, to cooperate and overcome their historical differences, and by the high-ambition coalition which included, among others, the EU and climate-vulnerable countries. In the meantime, the geopolitical situation has shifted, with increasing fragmentation and pressures on the rule-based order.

The **United States** has played an important role in the adoption and subsequent development of the Paris Agreement. The agreement was designed without binding national emission reduction targets to allow for signature by then President Obama, without the need for consent by the US Senate. The US delegation helped advance the negotiations even after 2017, when President Trump announced that the US would withdraw from the agreement. The US rejoined the Paris Agreement in 2020 under President Biden and played an active role until 2025 when President Trump withdrew the US once again. The US did not send a delegation to COP30 in Belém. Although no other Party has followed the US example, the leadership of the world's second-largest GHG emitter is seen to be missing in the negotiations. Outside the UNFCCC process, the US actively obstructed the adoption of climate measures in the International Maritime Organization (IMO) by influencing IMO Parties not to vote in favour.

China played a constructive role in the negotiations but did not take a strong leadership position, and did not match the EU's ambition. China is a dominant player in clean energy technologies such as solar panels and batteries, and has used its dominant position to restrict access to critical raw materials for the energy transition. On the other hand, China is still a major coal producer and consumer, and finances fossil projects abroad through its Belt and Road Initiative. Although China is an industrial powerhouse and the world's top GHG emitter, it is still considered a developing country under the UNFCCC.

The **EU** has traditionally played a leading role in international climate negotiations by submitting an ambitious NDC at an early point, backed up by equally ambitious domestic policy initiatives. However, in 2025 the EU adopted its NDC only a week before COP30, after difficult negotiations about its 2040 climate target amid consideration of how to reconcile climate ambition and industrial competitiveness. By missing both the original and the extended deadline for submission of the NDC, the EU could not play its traditional leadership role ahead of the COP. Even so, the EU NDC is among the most ambitious. However, in a time of geopolitical fragmentation, the EU failed to build strong coalitions to drive ambitious outcomes at COP30. Forging new coalitions and bilaterial partnerships

will be a task for EU climate and energy diplomacy, in line with the EU global climate and energy vision presented in October 2025.

Conflicting interests have become evident in discussions about climate finance, where the assessed funding needs of developing countries far exceed the collective climate finance pledges made by developed countries. Discussions at COP30 focused on mobilising finance from all sources to reach US$1.3 trillion by 2035, the larger target under the NCQG.

Free trade versus a level playing field

The EU has made efforts to ensure that its external trade does not support climate-damaging activities abroad. These include the EU Deforestation Regulation, the Methane Regulation, the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive and environmental clauses in the EU's trade agreements. The carbon border adjustment mechanism aims to ensure that EU climate action does not undermine the competitiveness of European industry, and to encourage trade partners to match the EU's climate ambition – thus creating a level playing field. This has led to debate over whether such 'unilateral' measures inhibit free trade and put developing countries at a disadvantage. To facilitate further discussions of trade issues, the Brazilian COP30 presidency launched the Integrated Forum on Climate Change and Trade for an initial phase of three years from early 2026 to the end of 2028. The forum is open to all interested UNFCCC Parties.

Multilateralism at the crossroads

Even though it is clear that a deep and rapid reduction of GHG emissions from **fossil fuels** is needed to achieve the targets of the Paris Agreement, recent COPs have struggled to arrive at consensus on the issue of fossil fuels. COP28 in 2023 was the first and last UN climate conference to explicitly mention an end to fossil fuels in the decision on the outcome of the global stocktake, calling for 'transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems'. Following up on this, the Brazilian COP30 Presidency aimed for a roadmap to move away from fossil fuels, but this was vetoed by a group of mostly oil- and gas-producing countries. This raises questions about the effectiveness of a multilateral approach and has led to initiatives by 'coalitions of the willing' to pursue specific objectives. Following the failure of COP30 to agree on a roadmap, Colombia and the Netherlands decided to co-host an international conference on the just transition away from fossil fuels in April 2026. In December 2022, the G7 initiated the Climate Club, an open intergovernmental forum on industrial decarbonisation. Climate action has been addressed successfully in other multilateral settings: the Kigali amendment to the Montreal protocol established a framework for the phase-out of climate-damaging fluorinated greenhouse gases (F-gases), and the International Civil Aviation Organization established a carbon pricing system (CORSIA) for aviation emissions.

Improving trust and transparency

Decisions about climate action need a sound evidence base because

1. today's actions have effects far into the future and across the globe,
2. climate action requires huge investment and deep transformation of industry and societies,
3. climate impacts can have huge costs and devastating consequences.

With the 1988 establishment of the IPCC, governments have sought to make sure that there is a solid scientific consensus on which decisions and policies can be based. Besides the periodic

assessment reports, the IPCC produces special reports on specific issues. In 2007, the IPCC received the Nobel Peace Prize. Its success has inspired initiatives like the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and the new Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution (ISP-CWP). The EU and a number of national governments worldwide have set up scientific advisory councils to provide evidence to guide decisions on climate policy.

However, **disinformation campaigns and misinformation** around climate change are growing issues. The International Panel on the Information Environment warns that inaccurate or misleading narratives about climate issues, spread across digital, broadcast, and interpersonal channels, can lead to a decline in public trust, diminished policy coordination and political inaction. At the same time, the decision by the United States, which has been a key player in climate research, to cut funding for collection and analysis of climate data puts the production of scientific evidence at risk.

The 'Global Multirão' decision welcomes the designation of COP30 as the 'COP of truth' and calls for restoring and trust and hope and the promotion of information integrity. In June 2025, the Global Initiative for Information Integrity on Climate Change launched – through its Global Fund for Information Integrity on Climate Change – a call to action for solutions to address disinformation and related tactics that aim to obstruct climate action. The first grants were awarded in September to partnerships with the aim of advancing research, journalism and communications that promote reliable information on climate change. The global initiative, established by UNESCO, the government of Brazil and the UN, also comprises 18 member countries and an advisory group.

Providing access to reliable information and countering false claims will remain an important issue, especially at a time when ever more powerful AI tools facilitate the creation and spreading of false or misleading information. The EU's evolving whole-of-society approach to countering information manipulation, including climate disinformation, is reflected in the planned European Democracy Shield, and in the work of Parliament's special committee on the Democracy Shield.

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Annex 1 – Milestones in EU and international climate policy

Developments under UNFCCC in **bold**, EU developments in ***bold+italic***.

Year	Event/Milestone
1988	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
1990	IPCC First Assessment Report ***Base year for EU climate targets***
1992	**United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**
1995	**COP1: First Conference of the Parties under the UNFCCC**
1997	**COP3: Kyoto Protocol adopted**
2000	***European Climate Change Programme***
2005	**Entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol** ***Launch of EU ETS***
2009	**COP15: Copenhagen Accord with 2°C target and climate finance pledge** ***EU climate and energy package with 20/20/20 targets***
2010	**COP 16: Cancún Agreements — framework for mitigation pledges, adaptation, technology & finance; Green Climate Fund**
2013	***EU effort-sharing starts***
2015	**COP21: Adoption of the Paris Agreement** **Intended Nationally Determined Contributions** ***EU Intended Nationally Determined Contribution***
2016	**Paris Agreement enters into force** Kigali amendment to Montreal Protocol International Civil Aviation Organization adopts CORSIA
2018	**COP24: main elements of Paris Agreement rulebook** IPCC special report on Global Warming of 1.5 °C ***LULUCF Regulation; Clean Energy for All Europeans package***
2019	Fridays for Future protests ***European Green Deal*** ***European Parliament declares climate and environmental emergency***
2021	**COP26: Glasgow Climate Pact, Paris Agreement rulebook finalised** **Second round of NDCs** ***European Climate Law; Fit for 55 package; EU NDC 2.0***
2022	**COP27: Loss & Damage fund**
2023	**COP28: First global stocktake** IPCC 6th Assessment Report (synthesis report)
2024	**COP29: new collective quantified goal for climate finance; Article 6 rulebook completed**
2025	**Third round of NDCs** International Court of Justice advisory opinion on climate change ***EU 2040 climate target; EU NDC 3.0***

Source: EPRS compilation.

Annex 2 – Key elements of major economies' NDCs

Countries are sorted by GHG emissions in 2022, starting with the largest emitters.

China – NDC 3.0 submitted on 3 November 2025	
GHG emissions in 2022	12 716 $MtCO_2e$ or 25.4 % of global emissions including LULUCF (source: Climate Watch)
Long-term strategy target	Peak carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieve climate neutrality before 2060
NDC 2.0 target	Reduction of net CO_2 emissions per unit of GDP by over 65 % by 2030 from the 2005 level
NDC 3.0 target	Reduction of net GHG emissions by 7–10 % by 2035 from peak level
Target type	Economy-wide, relative to peak emissions before 2030; unconditional
Sectors and gases included	All economic sectors; all seven GHGs
Separate target(s)	By 2035, increase the share of non-fossil fuels in total energy consumption to over 30 %; expand the installed capacity of wind and solar power to over six times the 2020 levels – striving to bring the total to 3 600 gigawatts; scale up the total forest stock volume to over 24 billion cubic meters.
National implementation	National carbon market. Dual control of total carbon emissions and intensity in national 5-year plans.
Adaptation	National Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change 2035

India – NDC 3.0 not yet submitted	
GHG emissions in 2022	3 737 $MtCO_2e$ or 7.5 % of global emissions including LULUCF (source: Climate Watch)
Long-term strategy target	Climate neutrality by 2070, according to its NDC 2.0 and long-term strategy
NDC 2.0 target	Net reduction of carbon intensity of its GDP by 45 % by 2030 from the 2005 level
Target type	Carbon intensity target; contingent on additional means of implementation to be provided by developed country Parties, technology transfer and capacity building
Separate target(s)	Achieve about 50 % cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources by 2030. Create an additional carbon sink of 2.5–3 $GtCO_2e$ through additional forest and tree cover by 2030

European Union – NDC 3.0 submitted on 5 November 2025	
GHG emissions in 2022	3 061 $MtCO_2e$ or 6.1 % of global emissions including LULUCF (source: Climate Watch)
Long-term strategy target	Climate neutrality by 2050, according to its NDC 2.0 and long-term strategy
NDC 2.0 target	Reduction of net GHG emissions by at least 55 % by 2030 from the 1990 level
NDC 3.0 target	Indicative reduction of net GHG emissions by 66.25–72.5 % by 2035 from peak level (based on linear trajectory between 2030 target in NDC2.0 and co-legislators' positions on 2040 target)
Target type	Absolute and economy-wide, base year target; unconditional. The EU submits a single NDC on behalf of all Member States and has opted for joint implementation with Iceland and Norway
Sectors and gases included	All economic sectors; all seven GHGs
Article 6 use	2035 target to be achieved through domestic measures only. Use of high-quality international credits under Article 6 from 2036 to facilitate achievement of the EU's 2040 climate target.
Separate target(s)	Net GHG removal target of 310 $MtCO_2e$ in LULUCF sector in 2030.
National implementation	European Climate Law, Governance Regulation, national energy and climate plans. For more details, see L. Jensen, The EU's climate action strategy, EPRS, European Parliament, May 2025
Adaptation	No specific targets for adaptation

Russia – NDC 3.0 submitted on 29 September 2025	
GHG emissions in 2022	1 821 $MtCO_2e$ or 3.6 % of global emissions including LULUCF (source: Climate Watch)
Long-term strategy target	Climate neutrality by 2060, according to its long-term strategy
NDC 2.0 target	Reduction of net GHG emissions by 70 % by 2030 from the 1990 level
NDC 3.0 target	Reduction of net GHG emissions by 65–67 % by 2035 from the 1990 level
Target type	Absolute and economy-wide, base year target; unconditional
Sectors and gases included	Energy, industrial processes and product use, agriculture, waste, LULUCF; all seven GHGs
Article 6 use	Possible use of international cooperation, with priority to domestic emission reduction
Separate target(s)	No available information
National implementation	Climate Doctrine of the Russian Federation; Unified national monitoring system for climate-active substances
Adaptation	National plan of measures of the second stage of adaptation to climate change; Regional and sectoral adaptation plans; Spatial Development Strategy of the Russian Federation

Brazil – NDC 3.0 submitted on 13 November 2024	
GHG emissions in 2022	1 538 $MtCO_2e$ or 3.1 % of global emissions including LULUCF (source: Climate Watch)
Long-term target	Climate neutrality by 2050, according to its NDC 3.0 (Brazil has not yet submitted a long-term strategy to the UNFCCC)
NDC 2.0 target	Reduction of net GHG emissions by 48.4 % by 2025, and 53.1 % by 2030, from the 2005 level
NDC 3.0 target	Reduction of net GHG emissions by 59–67 % by 2035 from the 2005 level
Target type	Absolute and economy-wide, base year target; unconditional
Sectors and gases included	All economic sectors; CO_2, CH_4, N_2O, SF_6, PFCs and HFCs
Article 6 use	Possibility to raise ambition beyond the -59 % level through international investments financed from the international transfer of mitigation outcomes generated in Brazil
Separate target(s)	No separate removal target
National implementation	Update of the National Plan on Climate Change (Climate Plan); no external advisory board
Adaptation	National Adaptation Strategy under the Climate Plan, with 16 sectoral adaptation plans being developed

Indonesia – NDC 3.0 submitted on 27 October 2025	
GHG emissions in 2022	1 530 $MtCO_2e$ or 3.1 % of global emissions including LULUCF (source: Climate Watch)
Long-term strategy target	Peak GHG emissions in 2030 and achieve climate neutrality by 2060 or sooner
NDC 2.0 target	Reduction of net emissions by 31.89 % unconditionally (and 43.2 % conditionally) by 2030, compared with business-as-usual scenarios of emissions projection started in 2010
NDC 3.0 target	Peak emissions by 2030; low-emission scenarios for 2031–2035 period
Target type	Absolute economy-wide emission targets, conditional on international support
Sectors and gases included	Energy, industrial processes and product use, waste, agriculture, and forestry and other land use; CO_2, methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O), and hydrofluorocarbons
Article 6 use	Indonesia welcomes bilateral, regional and international cooperation in NDC implementation under Article 5 and Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.
Separate target(s)	Sectoral emission projections for both low-emission scenarios
National implementation	Several major regulations and initiatives, including Presidential Regulation on carbon pricing instruments; National Environmental Protection and Management Plan; Government Regulation on Environmental Protection and Management Planning; One GHGs Data Policy
Adaptation	Annex 2 of Indonesia's NDC lists key programmes to achieve economic resilience, social and livelihood resilience, and social and livelihood resilience. Further integration of adaptation and mitigation efforts though adaptation actions with GHG mitigation co-benefits

Japan – NDC 3.0 submitted on 18 February 2025	
GHG emissions in 2022	1 044 $MtCO_2e$ or 2.1 % of global emissions including LULUCF (source: Climate Watch)
Long-term strategy target	Climate neutrality by 2050, according to its NDC 3.0 and long-term strategy
NDC 2.0 target	Reduction of net GHG emissions by 46 % by 2025 from the 2013 level
NDC 3.0 target	Reduction of net GHG emissions by 60 % by 2035, and 73 % by 2040, from the 2005 level
Target type	Absolute and economy-wide, base year target; unconditional
Sectors and gases included	All economic sectors; all seven GHGs
Article 6 use	Creation of the Joint Crediting Mechanism to secure accumulated emissions reductions and removals of approximately 100 $MtCO_2$ by 2030 and 200 $MtCO_2$ by 2040
Separate target(s)	No separate removal target
National implementation	Plan for global warming countermeasures; Advisory committee for natural resources and energy
Adaptation	Not included

Saudi Arabia – NDC 3.0 not yet submitted	
GHG emissions in 2022	775 $MtCO_2e$ or 1.5 % of global emissions including LULUCF (source: Climate Watch)
Long-term target	Climate neutrality by 2060 (announcement by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in October 2021). Saudi Arabia has not yet submitted a long-term strategy to the UNFCCC
NDC 2.0 target	Reducing and avoiding net GHG emissions by 278 $MtCO_2e$ annually by 2030, with 2019 as the base year
Target type	Not explicitly stated – CAT assumes a baseline scenario target; unconditional
Separate target(s)	Reach a renewable energy share of the energy mix of around 50 % by 2030. Half of electricity generated by natural gas by 2030

Canada – NDC 3.0 submitted on 12 February 2025	
GHG emissions in 2022	750 $MtCO_2e$ or 1.5 % of global emissions including LULUCF (source: Climate Watch)
Long-term strategy target	Climate neutrality by 2050, according to its NDC 3.0 and long-term strategy
NDC 2.0 target	Reduction of net emissions by 40–45 % by 2030, from the 2005 level
NDC 3.0 target	Reduction of net emissions by 45–50 % by 2035 from the 2005 level
Target type	Absolute and economy-wide, base year target; unconditional
Sectors and gases included	Energy, IPPU, agriculture, LULUCF (excluded for base year), waste; all seven GHGs
Article 6 use	Considering the potential
Separate target(s)	No separate removal target.
National implementation	Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act. Net-Zero Advisory Body.
Adaptation	National Adaptation Strategy.

United Kingdom – NDC 3.0 submitted on 30 January 2025	
GHG emissions in 2022	414 $MtCO_2e$ or 0.8 % of global emissions including LULUCF (source: Climate Watch)
Long-term strategy target	Climate neutrality by 2050, according to its NDC 3.0 and long-term strategy
NDC 2.0 target	Reduction of net GHG emissions by at least 68 % by 2030 from the 1990 level (excluding international aviation and shipping)
NDC 3.0 target	Reduction of net GHG emissions by 81 % by 2035 from the 2005 level (excluding international aviation and shipping)
Target type	Absolute and economy-wide, base year target; unconditional
Sectors and gases included	All economic sectors; CO_2, CH_4, and N_2O (base year 1990), HFCs, PFCs, SF_6 and NF_3 (base year 1995)
Article 6 use	Does not currently intend to use cooperative approaches but reserves its right to do so
Separate target(s)	No separate removal target
National implementation	Climate Change Act; Climate Change Committee
Adaptation	Third National Adaptation Programme

eprs@ep.europa.eu (contact)

https://eprs.in.ep.europa.eu (intranet)

www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank (internet)

http://epthinktank.eu (blog)