

Citizens' summary

Proposal for how to achieve a comprehensive climate change agreement

What is the problem?

Climate change is affecting people all over the world and is caused by:

- emissions of heat-trapping **greenhouse gases** from human activities like the burning of fossil fuels – coal, oil and gas
- the destruction and degradation of forests.

Climate change's effects include:

- more extreme weather – floods, heat waves and droughts
- rising sea levels
- large-scale loss of ecosystems.

If left unchecked, the socio-economic impact of climate change on the global economy is likely to dwarf the current financial crisis and economic recession.

To avoid the worst scenarios, man-made emissions of heat trapping gases (like CO₂) must stop increasing in the next decade and drop world-wide (current scientific advice says to at least 50% below 1990 levels by 2050).

How would the proposal tackle this problem?

International negotiations are under way to conclude a new global agreement at the UN climate change conference in Copenhagen (December 2009).

The necessary cuts in global emissions can be achieved only if all countries contribute their fair share according to their responsibility and capacity.

The Commission's proposal sets out what the different countries need to do to avoid dangerous climate impacts, improve energy security and enable the poorer and more vulnerable countries to continue to develop.

- **Developed countries** (including EU members) must:
 - take the lead in **developing and deploying new technologies** – this will create new jobs, strengthen our economies and reduce our dependence on finite resources
 - commit to strict and binding **targets for emission reductions, around 30% on average by 2020**, with the richer and less efficient countries contributing more - also taking account of factors like action already undertaken and population trends

- help **fund** the efforts of the developing countries – ensuring that the rich and most polluting countries contribute most.
- **Developing countries** should:
 - develop ambitious strategies for reducing the growth of their emissions – thereby providing their populations with cleaner air and electricity. The more advanced of these countries should contribute more to controlling emissions than the less advanced.
 - take really effective action, which will require financial and technical support from developed countries through an international mechanism. .

What is Europe doing to address climate change?

- **international advocacy** – European leaders are arguing for bold action to address climate change in their talks with leaders of other countries and regions.
- **The EU is already committed to reduce emissions** by at least 20% below 1990 levels by 2020 – and is ready to take on a 30% target if a fair and effective international agreement is achieved in Copenhagen.
- developing **innovative policies** – the EU emissions trading system is being copied by other regions across the world and the EU will reach out to other countries to create a more efficient international system.

What happens next?

The Commission will work towards a common EU position for the final stages of the international negotiations and the Copenhagen conference.

Its proposals should help focus the negotiations on the essentials for a fair agreement in Copenhagen and persuade other countries to take ambitious action.