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Background notes – Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the CFSP and the CSDP – 5 & 6 September 2015

Session II: Climate change in the framework of security

The year 2015 is a pivotal year in the fight against climate change. The **Conference of the Parties** (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC) and the **Meeting** of the **Kyoto Protocol Parties** (CRP11) will be held in Paris from November 30 to December 11, to conclude a legally binding agreement, including targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions for each contracting party, in order to limit global warming to below 2° Celsius over pre-industrial times.

The security aspect of climate change is a topic that has gradually gained in importance. The EU and other international organisations address it in their work concerning climate diplomacy.

1. Recent work at the EU level

In its conclusions of 20 July 2015 on climate diplomacy, the Foreign Affairs Council believes that climate change "*is a decisive global challenge which, if not urgently managed, will put at risk not only the environment but also world economic prosperity, poverty reduction, sustainable development and, more broadly, peace, stability and security. A worldwide transition towards a safe, sustainable and climate resilient low-carbon development path is a precondition for a secure and stable future*."

Furthermore, the Council declared that it "*is committed to addressing the security dimension of Climate Change, including by building up its climate diplomacy component, as an inherent part of its foreign policy* ".

In this context, the Council "*welcomes the publication of the G7 report "a new Climate for peace"[1] as commissioned under the UK G7 Presidency and completed under the German G7 Presidency, as well as the debate in the UN Security Council on June 30 initiated by Spain on the role of Climate Change as a threat multiplier for Global Security.*"

The Council "*looks forward to an update of the 2009 Secretary General [of the United Nations] Report "Climate Change and its possible Security Implications"[2]. *"

2. Evolution of the issue at EU level

The work at the European Union level on the impact of climate change on international security have been initiated in June 2007 by the **European Council**, who invited the **High Representative** and the **European Commission** to present a report on climate change and international security.[3]

The subject was raised again in July 2011 by the **European External Action Service** (EEAS) and the **European Commission** in a **joint discussion paper[4]** on European climate diplomacy. Parts of the

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[1] See 3. recent work at the G7, NATO and OSCE
[2] See 4. recent work at the United Nations
[3] *Changement climatique et sécurité internationale*, Document établi par le Haut Représentant et la Commission européenne à l'attention du Conseil européen, S113/08, 14 mars 2008.

report are present in the Foreign Affairs Council **conclusions** of July 2011 that recognise climate change as a threat multiplier. The conclusions indicate that the EU *"will continue to raise global awareness of the security risks to, and threat multiplier nature, of climate change, particularly in vulnerable regions."*

In November 2012 the **European Parliament** adopted a **resolution** *"on the role of the Common Security and Defence Policy in case of climate-driven crises and natural disasters[5]"*. The resolution adopted by the Parliament presents petitions to the High Representative / Vice- President regarding, among others 1) the consideration of climate change in the analysis of crises; 2) the assessment of countries and/or regions running the greatest risk of conflict and instability due to climate change; 3) improving the Union's capacity to assist partner countries regarding their resilience to climate change; 4) adaption to problems of long-term planning of civilian and military resources of the Union.

In its conclusions of June 2013 on European climate diplomacy, the Council of Foreign Affairs evokes once again the strategic and security dimension of climate change, and welcomes the efforts developed to strengthen the awareness and capacity on this topic including the United Nations Security Council and the Member States and partners.

3. Recent work at the G7 level and between international organisations

In June 2015, the **G7** has commissioned and completed a report entitled "A new climate for peace[6]" with the contribution of the EU institute for Security Studies. It identifies seven compound climate-fragility risks: 1) local resource competition, 2) livelihood insecurity and migration, 3) extreme weather events and disasters, 4) volatile food prices and provision, 5) transboundary water management, 6) sea-level rise and coastal degradation, 7) unintended effects of climate policies.

Three key policy areas are recognised in this report in order to strengthen the capacity of vulnerable states: adaption to climate change, development and humanitarian aid and peace building. The report makes recommendation which should be implemented, including: 1) make climate-fragility risks a central foreign policy priority, 2) enhance G7 cooperation, 3) set the global resilience agenda: inform multilateral processes and structures, 4) engage widely to ensure global actions produce local results.

In 2003 NATO, the OSCE , the Regional Environmental Centre, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) founded the **"Environment and Security initiative"** (ENVSEC). It aims to provide an integrated response to environment and security challenges.

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[4] *Towards a renewed and strengthened EU climate diplomacy*, Joint Reflection Paper, EEAS and European Commission, 9 July 2011.
[5] *European Parliament resolution of 22 November 2012 on the role of the Common Security and Defence Policy in case of climate-driven crises and natural disasters* (2012/2095(INI))
[6] *A new climate for peace: Taking Action on Climate and Fragility Risks*, adelphi, International Alert, The Wilson Center, The European Union Institute for Security Studies, 7 June 2015.

4. Recent work at the United Nations level

On 17 April 2007, **the Security Council of the United Nations** held its first **debate** on climate change and security. The Secretary-General of the organisation, Ban Ki-moon said that the impact of climate change is particularly pronounced in vulnerable regions that "*face multiple stresses at the same time -- pre-existing conflict, poverty and unequal access to resources, weak institutions, food insecurity, and incidence of diseases such as HIV/AIDS*".

In June 2009, the **United Nations General Assembly** adopted a **resolution** [7] in which it "*invites the major organs of the United Nations, to intensify their efforts […] in order to address security risks related to climate change*". Following this resolution, **the Secretary-General of the United Nations** presented a report on climate change and its possible security[8] implications.

Some points for discussion:

- How did the EU strengthen its capabilities and expertise on climate change in its delegations and in the EEAS?
- Which partnerships have been initiated with vulnerable states about the risks of climate change?
- How have the Council conclusions of July 2011 and June 2013 been implemented and how are the conclusions of July 2015 going to be implemented regarding the security risks of climate change?
- Do institutions insist enough on the security dimension in the negotiations ahead of the COP21 and CRP 11?

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[7] "*Climate change and its possible security implications*", 63/281, 3 June 2009.
[8] "*Climate change and its possible security implications*," Report of the Secretary-General of the UN, A/64/350, 11 September 2009.