



BRUSSELS
DIALOGUE
ON
CLIMATE
DIPLOMACY



Climate Diplomacy in 2020 – The State of Play

11th meeting of the Brussels Dialogue on Climate Diplomacy

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European Environmental Bureau, Brussels

REPORT

Welcome and Opening of the Meeting

[Ronald A. Kingham](#), *Executive Director, Environment & Development Resource Centre*, opened the meeting reminding the participants that “The purpose of the [Brussels Dialogue on Climate Diplomacy](#) is dialogue and that this is an informal network of international and regional organisations, think tanks, NGOs etc. set up for the exchange of information and to look for opportunities for cooperation among the more than 30 participating organisations. This is our 11th regular meeting not counting the [three international conferences in 2017 and 2019](#)”.

[Jeremy Wates](#), *Secretary General, European Environmental Bureau*, also welcomed the participants and in his opening remarks said that “It’s been a very dramatic and interesting year for climate. I don’t know when there isn’t going to be an important one but at least in the EU we’ve seen a dramatic shift from the Juncker Commission to the von der Leyen commission on various issues - including on climate as we saw already on the 16th of July when the [political guidelines from von der Leyen](#) were presented. You have this very clear declaration of ambition for Europe to become the first climate neutral continent. And you had other elements mentioned such as [Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism](#). This was further elaborated on the [11th of December when we had the European Green Deal being announced](#).”

And we saw the [European Climate Law proposals](#) unveiled last week which were widely welcome by the environmental movement but there were also quite some critical reactions as well. One of the big questions for those of us who work especially on European policies is at what stage does European environmental ambition run up against external constraints from the interactions with the rest of the world? While the issue of [carbon leakage](#) may probably be quite often exaggerated, it’s nonetheless still legitimate to raise the question. At what point does Europe’s ambition become too high? And will businesses respond by saying: ‘Well, across the water we can do something different.’ That’s obviously a very relevant consideration in the Brexit negotiations. But even before Brexit, it’s been an issue. This brings up the whole question of trade and trading relations. And, as I said, the Carbon Border Adjustment was, for me at least, one of the least unexpected elements to see referred to in the political guidelines.

Climate diplomacy is obviously very relevant when you’re talking about how Europe’s ambition can meet some obstacles in relation to the rest of the world, whether it’s in bilateral trading relations or in the UNFCCC processes. So I do find this a really interesting topic and I’m looking forward to further discussion.”

Ron Kingham said that “Typically near the beginning of each year we try to look together at the year ahead and, as Jeremy Wates was explaining, 2020 will be a quite important year with an important COP coming up. And, as we will be hearing from Gilles Morellato, there are a number of important items on the agenda of the European Council. We also have a EU-China summit coming up in September and, of course, we have the U.S. elections in November which could affect the course of the multilateral negotiations on climate change in the future. We will also be hearing today from Monika Oczkowska from UNEP and from Robert Dresen from NATO but unfortunately we’ve just received a message from Esra Buttanni from the OSCE saying she is unable to connect to this video conference due to technical reasons. I can, however, refer you to a [presentation on Climate Change and Security in the OSCE Context](#) which she would have made today.

Forward Planning by International and Regional Organisations

Monika Oczkowska, *Institutional cooperation with the European Union on energy and climate, UN Environment Programme, UNEP Brussels Office*

“Monika Oczkowska began her presentation by saying that: “When it comes to climate diplomacy in 2020, from UNEP’s side, the most important message is that the target of curbing emissions by 1.5 degree agreed in 2015 in Paris is currently slipping away. We only have about seven months to increase ambition and to support countries to update their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) by September, 2020. This is a clear warning for this year and it’s based on the latest version of our emissions gap report that tells us that if we don’t, if we were to respect the current NDCs that we submitted to the UNFCCC, the earth would warm by around 3 degrees by the end of the century.

Additionally, the IPCC in its [Special Report on 1.5 Warming](#) warns that already passing the 2-degree threshold will lead to irreversible impacts - with hundreds of millions of people affected by extreme weather events, severe droughts and floods, increased competition for natural resources, in turn leading to displacement and tensions. These displacement tensions can, in the worst case scenario, lead to acceleration of conflicts, especially in already fragile contexts. Climate change is a risk multiplier, which is exacerbating existing stresses and tensions such as population growth, economic inequality, resource constraints, or political unrest in many countries.

Impacts of such a 3 degrees scenario are very much unpredictable because all our adaptation scenarios are only ready for a world warmed at 2.5 degrees. 3 degrees means really entering uncharted territory and I think we must do anything in our power to avoid this.

2020 is therefore a critical year for climate action with the upcoming [COP26 in Glasgow](#)¹ that will determine the course of efforts to avert such a climate crisis and provide leadership and decisions. The key priority for us for climate action in 2020 is to support countries in exhibiting more ambitions. Especially G20 countries are of crucial importance in achieving sufficient ambitions because those 20 countries account for almost 80% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Currently only six of them are on track for meeting the 2030 ambition, and only 5 out of 20 have some plans for carbon neutrality in the long term. And of course, the EU should be praised for the ambition to make Europe the first climate neutral continent by 2050 with the Green Deal.

The EU should use its own commitment to engage in the highest level of diplomacy especially among G20 countries and other large emitters, and to inspire them to follow in their footsteps and start decarbonizing their economies. Because what we need is an economy wide transition. We need to not only cover the energy sectors, but cover all other sectors like agriculture, forestry, building, and transportation. From UNEP’s side, another important message for 2020 is that, especially in the context of the [Super Year for Nature](#) is that we should be investing in partnership and solutions that

¹ This conference was moved to November 2021 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

can provide both mitigation and adaptation and nature based solutions. They are a key example with such an opportunity to combine adaptation and mitigation agenda, and they should be implemented at scale this year. [Nature Based Solutions](#) (NBS) include all actions to protect, restore and manage ecosystems, both terrestrial and marine. And I think we have to stress that climate and biodiversity agendas are very closely interlinked and therefore they should be addressed in an integrated manner.

For example, climate change can really accelerate biodiversity loss or lead to extreme weather events, such as we saw in [Australia recently](#), there were the wildfires which had disastrous consequences for nature. Research indicates that nature based solutions can provide up to one-third of the cost effective climate mitigation that we need by 2030. It also generates multiple economic and social benefits like job creation, economic growth and improved livelihoods. So they can also contribute to peace and security. The COP25 in Madrid was already a success because it generated this unprecedented momentum, and we hope that the COP in Glasgow is going to be an opportunity to accelerate that action even more.

Another major event this year is the [COP15 of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity CBD](#) in China², which is also an opportunity to unlock the full potential of nature in climate action by mainstreaming NDCs of all countries. 2020 is a very important year to save the Paris agreement and to save the 1.5 degree target and prevent irreversible climate impacts, which could have serious consequences for nature, for people, for our peace and security, and to achieve that we really need a quantum leap in emissions reduction.

Again, according to our emissions gap reports, we would need a 7.6% reduction every year for the next 10 years to save the Paris agreement and to curb the warming well below 2 degrees. But I think the upcoming COP is an opportunity for countries to set timelines to actually meet these targets.”

Gilles Morellato, *Policy Officer, Climate Diplomacy, European External Action Service*:

“In December last year, we had the new Commission, a new High Representative, and almost at the same time the [European Green Deal](#) adopted by the Commission.

It includes inspirational methods just evolved or just developed to combine all the dimensions of sustainable development with climate as a cornerstone. And at the same time in December, the first trip of the new High Representative Borrell was to the COP in Madrid. This was the first time a High Representative went to the COP. Just after that, Borrell attended the European Council, sending a strong message on climate. On one hand he emphasised the aim of the EU to become climate neutral by 2050 and on the other hand, he underlined especially with regards to the [European External Action Service \(EEAS\)](#), the necessity to pay more attention to climate diplomacy.

He came back to the EEAS, mid-December with the feeling that climate was top priority everywhere, and that he had a strong mandate from the European leaders to do more and in the short term. That led us to a ministerial discussion on January 20th on [the issue of climate diplomacy](#) in order to deepen, improve, and strengthen European climate diplomacy. We had the opportunity to distribute strong messages through concrete conclusions on this occasion, on the way we could extend our climate diplomacy. And it's been decided to try to have strategic, tailor-made approaches towards priority partners. Among them are the non EU G20 economies because they are major emitters accounting for more than 70% of global emissions, in addition to countries with big regional influence or who could be examples of leadership through partnership on climate with the EU.

After COP25 in Madrid, both Timmermans and Borrell expressed their disappointment. One issue is the partnerships and dialogues beyond COPs. Beyond COPs we need bilateral tailor-made relations.

² Due to the Pandemic, the CBD COP 15 has been postponed to 17 - 30 May 2021

And that's exactly what we are trying to build now together and in strong coordination with the Member States. Our aim is to have a coordinated and strengthened approach towards targeted partners and using every contact to put climate as a top priority. This is not necessarily focused on NDCs, or on what's been committed through COPs but also on sectoral targets, on sectoral corporations in order also to have an impact on the ground. The aim is to mobilise all the relevant actors. For the first time last week, we had a Minister's lunch of Environment ministers dedicated to climate diplomacy in order to fully explain the demand launched in January by Foreign Affairs ministers and to make sure that everyone is in the same boat.

Yesterday, we had a meeting of the [Green Diplomacy Network](#). This informal body will prepare the strategies according to Foreign Affairs Council conclusions.³

[Esra Buttanri](#), *Senior Adviser, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, OSCE*

[Click here to view the presentation.](#)

[Robert Dresen](#), *Policy Planning Adviser, Office of the Secretary General, NATO*

Robert began his presentation by stating: "It's great to be here and it's also very good to hear the other panellists about the developments at the United Nations, the EU and the OSCE.

My name is Robert Dresen. I work in the office of the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) as a policy planner.

At NATO, we are also looking at climate issues, but from our own perspective of course, as every organisation has a different mandate and different role to play. So, first and foremost, I would like to say that we are very aware of the needs to coordinate efforts and to make sure that the organisation can do its best.

NATO also has its own characteristics, which defines what it can or cannot do when it comes to climate and security. NATO is a political, military organisation whose mandate covers the security of one region, the Euro-Atlantic area. And this means that NATO is not the first responder on all themes of climate change nor on all regional challenges that the whole world is facing.

Certainly there are climate and security related challenges that are important to NATO and that are related to the mission of our organisation. Conceptually, these challenges can be grouped into three categories:

First, the main task of NATO is to ensure the security of the Euro-Atlantic area. This security environment is changing rapidly as the local climates change. We can look at the conditions in the Arctic, but also the occurrence of more extreme weather events and sea level rising in other parts of the Euro-Atlantic area. These are realities that NATO has to adapt to. So it's already said that there are two tactics: adaptation and mitigation. In this instance, it's something that NATO needs to adapt to these different environments in which we operate both militarily and otherwise.

A second basket of issues is the impact that climate change has beyond our own Euro-Atlantic area. This is because there are conflicts and instability that is exacerbated by climate change, and that could have spill over effects on the security environment of NATO countries. Therefore it is in NATO's interest to work on the awareness of climate impact on our neighbouring regions, and also to work through the partnerships that we have with Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries,

³ ED: See, for example, [Climate diplomacy: Council renews the EU's commitment to place climate action at the centre of external policy](#), Council of the EU, Press release, 20 January 2020

See also: [Outcome of the Council Meeting, 3754th Council Meeting, Environment](#), Brussels, 5 March 2020.

See also: [European Environment Bureau Input to the EU Environment Council Meeting](#), Brussels, 5 March 2020

and around the world, to work with them, to increase awareness and mitigate negative climate effects.

Thirdly, it must be recognised that NATO and the militaries of NATO allies have a carbon footprint. While it's not the largest contribution to global CO₂ emissions, it's not insignificant either. As a responsible international organisation, NATO has the intentions to aim to minimise this carbon footprint while also safeguarding its ability to fulfil its key mission of providing security to our allies.

The issues that I'm outlining here are not entirely new. NATO has been dealing with environmental issues as early as 1969 and with issues like disaster response even earlier. In the 1950s when there were floods in the Netherlands the first NATO disaster response was set up. NATO has a long history of dealing with issues related to the environment and in fact, NATO was part of the [environmental security initiative OSCE programme in 2003](#). Secretary General Rasmussen was the first secretary general of NATO to address the climate change conference in Copenhagen in 2009. In 2010, the key strategic document of the Alliance mentions climate change among one of the key factors shaping the alliance security environment, this gives a mandate basis for NATO action.

Now in 2014, NATO adopted something called the Green Defence Framework, which was aimed at reducing energy and environmental footprints of the military. And in fact, we have a program called the [Science for Peace and Security Programme](#), which has numerous projects that are working on technical and operational solutions to improve NATO initiatives. The impact of climate change is one of the factors that is taken into account when assessing NATO's operational planning and capability development.

This also goes for the long-term. Across the Atlantic in Norfolk, Virginia, there is the NATO [Allied Command Transformation](#) which publishes the [Strategic Foresight Analysis](#). In this strategic foresight analysis, climate change figures prominently as one of the factors that NATO has to look at.

We must also be realistic and self-critical and that there is a lack of coherence and visibility to all of these efforts that are undertaken at NATO. Which brings me to our current dynamics and planning: Of late, within the NATO leadership and allied nations, a new momentum has taken roots with regard to climate and security. The Secretary General, other NATO leaders and key allied nations have expressed an interest in stepping up NATO's efforts and visibility when it comes to climate and security issues. The office of the Secretary General policy planning together with colleagues throughout organisations such as the UN and EU are currently looking into possibilities on how to step up NATO's efforts. We will be considering all the three baskets that I outlined before. One: the security of the Euro-Atlantic area. Two: climate change impact beyond our borders and three, minimising our own carbon emissions. Additionally, we'll have a close look at certain cross cutting elements, which are enablers for success. These include our public diplomacy efforts, our internal organisation, and notably, the cooperation and coordination that we have with other international organisations and partner countries.

We also want to interact as much as possible with other experts from the climate and security community for insights and recommendations. We would like to use this platform also to invite everybody to get in touch if you have ideas or suggestions about things that NATO could do."

Ron Kingham asked if Robert could mention the importance of NATO in helping to increase coordination among member states' forces in the event of natural disasters. "That is also an area of priority, right?"

Robert Dresen replied by saying "This is an area of priority when you look at our military planning. We have to prepare for all sorts of scenarios. And if we are operating in a context where severe weather events become more of the norm, we have to look at what that means for the resilience of your national defence, for your supply lines, for critical infrastructure as well as for providing human security, which is also an element that NATO looks at. So, at NATO, we have a coordination cell,

which is the [Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre \(EADRCC\)](#) which coordinates responses of NATO. There is a similar coordination on the EU side. This is also an area where NATO EU coordination will be very important. Climate induced natural disaster response is one of the areas that we'll look into. I hope to be able to talk and a bit more concrete, definite terms as to NATO actions at a future moment.”

Discussion

During the informal discussion participants spoke in their individual capacities and not necessarily as representatives of their respective organisations.

Olivia Lazard, Director, Peace in Design Consulting / Policy Advisor, EDRC

Olivia gave thanks to the panellists for their presentations saying they were very interesting adding that “We have UNEP on the one hand saying we need more nature based solutions. This is indeed a key aspect of how we try to reimagine and recreate new economic equilibriums. You have the European Union saying we need more Climate Diplomacy and we need to try and target specific partnerships with different types of categories of countries who are either big polluters or promise the benefits of a good transition and good climate behaviour. Lastly, we have NATO saying, yes, we need to ask ourselves some more questions about what does climate change mean for each organisation.

I have a couple of questions which are interrelated but, I'm going to make a bit of a generalisation for the sake of time. In the current framing of how we try to tackle climate, we consider the physical and renewable energy efficiency the key to curbing emissions. The reality is that with the routes that we're taking with this particular transition, we're not really taking into account the emissions coming from extracting the minerals and materials necessary to realise the new type of economy that we want to create. A lot of the minerals and materials that we need for this transition, for a huge part, come from fragile, unstable countries or downright conflict areas.

There has been little conversation both in the European Union and NATO about this, which there should be because some of these materials are used for elevating battlefields to a higher level, in order to have a lot less boots on the ground. This is linked to new strategies around digital wars, around drones and around new types of missiles. We're seeing a lot of geostrategic movements around this new type of war and type of competition that happens over the resources needed for all of these transitions.

But the reality is that all of these different things essentially come down to how do we actually take into account the fact that the transition that we're going through is likely to cause more ecological damage if we don't take into account the moment of extraction. We have an opportunity cost. There is a problem in terms of the routes that we've decided to take and the cost that it's going to create in terms of climate emissions, ecological destruction, and therefore going against nature based solutions because the materials that we need are found in key ecosystems. How we essentially adapt to or respond to climate change right now is short delivery, but we must not let this short term focus compromise the future of the entire biosphere and ecosystem integrity.

That's one key question: Are all your organisations thinking about this. And my second question, much more concise is: What is the Green Diplomacy Network and what is it supposed to do?”

Radostina Primova, Senior Analyst, Economic Program, Center for the Study of Democracy, Sofia

“Most of you know me from the Brussels Dialogue on Climate Diplomacy as part of my previous job at the Heinrich Boll Foundation where I followed the topic of climate security. Some short background information: Recently, I moved to Bulgaria where I continue to be dedicated to the

topics of energy transition, energy security and international climate policies, as well as the external dimensions of EU trade and mobility policies at the [Centre for the Study of Democracy](#), with a geographic focus on Southeast Europe and the Western Balkans in particular.

First of all I would like to say that due to my previous interest on the topic and with all related issues, I decided to follow the topic, but I also realised there is a lack of capacity and awareness on the topic and especially in Southeast European context where it is challenging to translate these issues and transfer these concepts in a climate sceptic policy environment.

So I decided to bring forward the topic in SEE context. Our Institute has several programmes that cover different aspects of the topic. We have a law programme focusing on human rights and the rule of law, a sociological programme that works on migration, gender issues and social justice, a security programme, and as part of the economic programme we focus on energy security and decarbonisation in Europe. We don't have special expertise on climate security topics, but we have developed a concept for a European energy and climate security index and I am aiming to integrate the climate security dimension in our economic programme.

Coming back to the topic, I would like to raise three major comments. The first one builds very much on the issues that Olivia brought to the discussion and is also linked to the carbon neutrality discussion and the problem of identifying the so-called false solutions. Basically, the issue of how we are going to fulfil the objectives of the Paris agreement and the carbon neutrality goal is an important one. We have seen it recently with negotiations on the European Climate Law where there is a lot of backlash from some Eastern European countries and in particular there is currently a revival of the discussion on the use of nuclear energy as part of their 2050 decarbonisation strategies. Many Central and Eastern European countries are seeing nuclear energy as a climate mitigation strategy and a way to basically fulfil their climate targets, in particular when defining the milestones of their 2050 national low-carbon strategies. This trend has major economic, sustainability, energy security and safety implications for the European continent.

Especially in France Macron is talking about Poland-France Cooperation on nuclear energy. In Bulgaria, there are plans to build a new 2000-MW nuclear power plant Belene that is expected to come online by 2035. Nuclear energy will thus cover 60% of the domestic power supply in 2040, with a total nuclear capacity of 3.89 GW. The realization of this nuclear project could thus have severe security and financial implications for the Bulgarian energy system, with potential risks for its macroeconomic stability and increasing its dependence on Russian nuclear technology.

I just wanted to raise awareness about these aspects of the energy transition; as such nuclear projects could lock CEE countries in burdensome dependencies and undermine EU sustainability and climate policies. This is an additional dimension that I think needs to be discussed within the policy debates on reaching the 2050 carbon neutrality goal.

The other issue is related to geoengineering. The IPCC report already includes negative emissions technologies in its scenarios and solutions for reaching the 1.5-degree objective. Part of the experts claim that only nature-based solutions will not be enough. The second question is how do you address this issue of false solutions within the climate security context? Geoengineering like solar irradiation, but also carbon capture and storage and BECCS could have actually not only serious environmental, social and human rights impacts but also very serious planetary and security implications in the future depending on who controls these kinds of technologies.

Stephen Minas, *Associate Professor, School of Transnational Law, Peking University*

“Good morning colleagues. I will be very brief. I just want to comment about the possibilities for engaging with particular partners, both in the UNFCCC and more broadly. I think it's important to

remember the potential of engaging with neighbourhood countries. Radostina just now mentioned the Western Balkans and we see that this year the Energy Community is going through a very important and difficult process in terms of how they set up government relations. There is a formal process for that. But also there is a degree of engagement which I think would be helpful. And then of course, there's another neighbouring country, which is also a member of G20, and is also the chair of the next conference of parties: the UK. So I think any kind of engagement we can have with the UK will be very important to making a success of COP26. Thank you”.

Neil Wood, *MA2 to CMC, NATO*

“In a similar vein really, regarding COP26, Robert didn't mention that there is a head of steam amongst the NATO nations, which hadn't previously existed. The UK and Italy are intending to organise some form of conference away day for the North Atlantic council ambassadors to discuss climate aspects from a NATO perspective, which is encouraging. I've spoken to my point of contact within the UK delegation to try and get across the message that surely at COP26, there should be a climate security strategic narrative to be included in the events. And the UK should be working with NATO and with other international organisations to incorporate that. Any lobbying that anybody can do in the direction of the UK and Italy to get them to incorporate that is pretty much the better, the more the merrier.

I'll throw in a left ball about COVID-19. I'm certainly no expert, but in terms of the likelihood of future pandemics and disease spreading due to a slow onset climate change impacts, there is potentially an opportunity there to break through the noise of COVID which is dominating the media at the moment that there is potentially downstream or second order effect of the increased likelihood due to climate change of such pandemics taking hold - which is a way to get climate back in the news again.

I also want to make a comment about the extraction of minerals. I think NATO does have a role to play there in its strategic foresight analysis to look at the inevitable fight for scarce resources, whether it be water or energy or precious metals that we need to support the clean transition. So that's certainly something that NATO's [Allied Command Transformation \(ACT\)](#) should be taking on board to identify potential areas of resource conflict associated with that clean transition, which is something that we need to work on. Thank you”.

Jamie Shea, *Senior Fellow, Friends of Europe / Secretary General, Global Military Advisory Council on Climate Change*

“What we're seeing in the UK at the moment is a control of crisis or a series of crises coming together. There was severe flooding in the UK. We got to be under a great deal of stress and strain to handle the flood situation. Then on top of that you got COVID-19 with all of the extra stress and pressure that has put on the health service. This feeds into your idea of a public order and preventing mass panic, and disruptive supply chain knock-on effect with panic buying.

The migration issue still continues with more and more people turning up in boats and the situation in Syria is only getting worse. While it's a political conflict, climate change is lurking in the background of the origin. We could carry on, but it's quite interesting to see that it's not often one thing, but it's a conjunction of things hitting you at the same time and putting additional stress on the system.

This has been playing for so many years in South Africa and other developing countries which are the most vulnerable countries of the world. It was quite interesting to see some of the more wealthy places deal with these phenomena. Looking at that conjunction of the cascading effects is interesting for NATO. I'm very much hoping that NATO will start seeing this issue. Neil, you will remember that

when I was there that you were in the EU it was so difficult to get NATO to take it up. So it's really good that it is now apparently moving in a more positive direction”.

Robert Dresen: “As Neil said, indeed, there is this initiative by the UK and Italy to have a formal seminar with the NATO ambassadors. This seminar also is timed in a way to inform the work that we are doing to streamline and enhance all of NATO's efforts in the climate field. One thing I would like to add in response to Radostina and also what Stephen was talking about, working with Eastern European countries that might have some less enthusiasm for the topic or with countries in the MENA region that have lots of other challenges, but also when it comes now to the UK is that, one must not underestimate the value of NATO as a diplomatic corp. At NATO we sit together with our transatlantic partners but also with the UK, with Turkey. We have longstanding partnerships with key partners in the MENA region, in the Euro-Atlantic area and across the globe. So apart from only looking at what NATO can do in terms of activities and projects, NATO is also a valuable forum for exchange and for talking to countries that do not always automatically sit together in other forums”.

Olivia Lazard: “I have just a quick feedback for what Neil was saying. I think that indeed NATO with its geostrategic foresight is very well placed to look at this issue of rare mineral extraction and more generally resource extraction that has to do with the transition. I think that it needs to look at two different things if I may. The first thing is, is it indeed the right path forwards to go down this road of rare mineral extraction because it will cause havoc not just in ecological terms but also very much in conflict, violence and fragility terms. The first question which I think that we need to ask ourselves and that connects with a larger question. Obviously NATO (or the European Union for that matter) can make its own decisions but it has to make them according to other developments that are taking place.

What we're seeing is that there are some massive geostrategic conflicts happening at present. In terms of how Russia, China, the U.S. and certain others key geostrategic players are trying to position themselves on this question and how that's also already causing some tensions that have a lot more to do with and resemblance to economic war or to a certain sort of redefinition of power balances and power shifts across the globe. I think that when it comes to geostrategic foresight, for NATO, there's very much this question of whether resource extraction for rare minerals is the only road and is it necessary indeed to ensure Euro-Atlantic security, taking into account everything - not just the usual criteria in terms of security but also taking ecological integrity into account.”

Larry Moffett, Coordinator, Rise for Climate Belgium

I'm a member of a movement here in Brussels called Rise for Climate. I want to pick up on a couple of points that Monica made. She mentioned the short timeframe that we have between now and the COP in November. I think one of the main criticisms that the climate movement has been addressing when it comes to the Green Deal and Climate Law is the lack of intermediate targets. There is a target for 2050, but we strongly feel that there is a need for intermediate targets for 2030 and 2040. And my understanding is that Timmermans says that that's going to be discussed in September, but of course we think that's much too late. We don't see why that shouldn't be discussed and decided already in June.

Monica also mentioned the social impact of climate change. I think it's interesting to see that Amnesty International has now picked up climate as a key human rights issue. Considering the possible disruption and instability that it can cause and risk of conflict and human rights violations.

And then one last point, the Trump administration has announced its withdrawal from the Paris agreement, which will be effective in November, right around the time of the US presidential elections. But I think maybe something that a lot of non-Americans don't realise is that the election will take place in November and of course many of us hope that that will indicate a change in climate

policy. But the inauguration is only in January. So there is a two month period where the current administration will still be in charge, and they will still be at the COP26. However, at the COP25 in Madrid, I know that there was a large delegation of congressional Democrats led by Nancy Pelosi. So I'm guessing that at the COP26, there will be an equally big delegation there to try to reassure the other participants that hopefully as of January, there will be a big change in U.S. policy."

Alexander Verbeek, *Policy Director, Environment & Development Resource Centre*

"I just want to give a few final comments. First of all, this is an interesting way to have our meeting. It's nice to see everybody in so many different places. We save carbon and we save our health I suppose by not traveling these days.

What struck me from the debate is the complexity of what Olivia, Jamie and a few others have already mentioned. It is climate change, but it's also biodiversity loss, loss of nature. It's also resource scarcity we're dealing with. As Jamie was already saying, it's these compounded risks that built upon each other.

A very recent example is Australia. Climate change caused that drought. Because the drought was combined with heat, which is also because of climate change, you've got these unimaginably large forest fires. Another effect of climate change is more humidity in the air which leads to more and more intense rainfall, which the dry lands cannot absorb, nor are there plants left that can absorb the water. Those two earlier factors, drought and forest fires, make the flooding worse. And it is these kinds of compounded risks that you have to account for when building capacity to deal with all these problems at the same time. In the past we have been focused mainly on welfare and economy; the environment gives us now a clear warning that we can't ignore any longer.

And now you will see that all these elements come together and affect each other. On top of that, maybe related to it, governance worldwide shows a worrying trend towards nationalism, towards short-term interests and towards a disregard for science as well as for openness. We won't find solutions without good governance and this likely the biggest challenge of all.

It's these compounded risks in nature that you also see in society where all these challenges now start to affect each other. In the past years the temperatures, and cases of extreme weather, have been rising rapidly. And ultimately the planetary security challenges will have to be dealt with by governance. You also have to look at the economy. We need a completely new kind of structure. We have seen that on the short term, due to COVID-19, emissions are going down. It's actually an interesting lesson. In a way we're finally doing what we should have done and in the months to come I look forward to see how much the impact will be on emissions.

What worries me is what will happen in the long run. But even sooner, when we are in 2040, when global temperatures are rising up to somewhere between one and a half and two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, we'll see impact of climate change at a level that may be well predicted, but hard to imagine.

The world as we know it will further change, and therefore we all need to work together, and talk about it. The often quite academic climate-security debate might change into a much more real security issue and some may be more openly start fighting for their own interests.

These were just some final thoughts and comments after having heard all our deliberations. I would like to thank you so much for organising this programme."

Jeremy Wates: Before closing, I just wanted to reiterate a couple of points. I think Alexander's very last comment provokes the need for another half hour discussion about how we should be spending money on defence and drought prevention. But I want to go back to the comments by Olivia as I think her point about bringing in the issue of resources was very important as was Radostina's

comment about false solutions. I just want to be more concrete about that. As Olivia was saying, renewable energy sources are not going to be the sole solution. A very interesting study⁴ that was done by Material Economics a couple of years ago looked at the contribution from renewables, the combination of renewables, energy efficiency and smart grid and concluded that even all those three together would only take you halfway to limiting warming to the needed level. To get the other half of the way, you need what we call “circular economy measures”. So it's about demand reduction. You're not going to get that by replacing every coal powered station, oil, etc. by windmills. You're not going to get there by replacing every petrol or diesel vehicle with an electric vehicle because those have huge resource implications as well. We need to be looking for upstream solutions that reduce their overall demand.

I understand why NATO has to think ahead because that's what it does. It has to think about future resource wars and their positioning around those. But, it's clearly more constructive or rational to think about preventing resource wars from happening by reducing the demand for resources and having policies that do that.

Part of the European Green Deal – at least at the high level narrative - refers to deeply transformative policies and we will hopefully see later this month the Circular Economy Action Plan⁵ with a number of policies that will go in the direction of resource use reduction. So it's not about just building a few windmills.”

Monika Oczkowska: “I just have a comment on what Olivia said about resource extraction and I'm not a specialist on this topic, but I just wanted to stress UNEP really tries to think about the three really important agendas being climate, biodiversity and circularity in a very holistic manner to first explore and maximize synergies between them, while also trying to avoid trade-offs between those three agendas and to see, for example, how recycling can both limit the resource extraction and also contribute to climate mitigation. We are trying to really think in a holistic manner about the three because they're closely interlinked. I also just want to quickly mention, I really appreciate Radostina's comments about false solutions and we are also really aware of them. Especially when it comes to nature based solutions, it's not only about planting just any trees like Palm Oil trees. It's about planting the good trees, the climate resilient ones. So we are very aware of those false solutions, the ‘good to be true solutions’ and I think that's the role of science to guide us how to avoid and prevent those.”

Gilles Morellato: “Thank you to everyone for the very relevant comments that highlight that there is no silver bullet for this climate crisis. When we're in front of such an emergency, we will have to make priorities and that will probably contribute to make the agenda and the challenges numerous and not necessarily fit together”.

To answer the question about what the Green Diplomacy Network is: It's a network of all the diplomats in European capitals dealing with climate and/or environment. It's an informal gathering whose aim it is to meet a couple of times per year in order to keep everyone posted and to enhance coordination amongst foreign ministries”.

Ron Kingham brought the meeting to a close by saying “This meeting was another good example of why the Brussels Dialogue is a platform that brings together a very diverse group of organisations together working on different angles of the interdependent issues and interdependent solutions.

⁴ ED: See: [Completing the Picture - How the Circular Economy Tackles Climate Change](#), Ellen MacArthur Foundation and Material Economics, V.3 - 26 September 2019 and [The Circular Economy - a Powerful Force for Climate Mitigation: Transformative innovation for prosperous and low-carbon industry](#), Material Economics, 2018

⁵ ED: See [“European Commission Adopts Circular Economy Action Plan”](#), 28 May 2020

Looking forward, we plan to circulate a list of recent and forthcoming activities of the participating organisations. We will also soon be sharing a draft schedule for BDCD meetings for the rest of the year.”

Olivia Caeymaex, *Peace Programme Director, Quaker Council for European Affairs* added that regarding upcoming meetings “we very much look forward to working together on organising a dialogue in October or November, bringing maybe the peace building community from the European Peace Building Liaison office together with this group to talk about the cross cutting things that we can address and certainly to give a peacebuilding lens to this very important discourse.

The European Peace Building Liaison office is ready to provide a panellist. If it could be of interest, they've developed some videos and are working with Adelphi and Clingendael on some reports and research, again, bringing these two areas of work together.”

END