



PLANET IN PERIL

'POZNAN OUTCOMES & COPENHAGEN PROSPECTS'



**European Economic and Social Committee
Room JDE 51, Rue Belliard 99, B-1040 Brussels
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Summary Report

Introduction

The Planet in Peril conference, held in Brussels on 15 December 2008, was organised by the Institute for Environmental Security the Global Legislators Organisation for a Balanced Environment (GLOBE-EU and GLOBE-Europe) in association with the European Economic and Social Committee and EurActiv to evaluate the outcomes of the UN Climate Change Conference in Poznan. The speakers not only addressed the relevance of Poznan as a halfway station on the way from Bali to Copenhagen, but also discussed the outcomes of the December 2008 European Council meeting, the role of Asia in the global climate negotiations and the prospects for increased transatlantic co-operation between the new US administration and the new EU Commission to be appointed in 2009.

Session I: Results from Poznan: Reflections on the UNCCC, COP 14

Stéphane Buffetaut, Chair, Sustainable Development Observatory, European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)

The meeting was opened by Mr Buffetaut who welcomed the participants and indicated that the Economic and Social Committee was delighted to host this event. The European Economic and Social Committee is pushing for an ambitious deal in Copenhagen with ambitious emission cuts for developed countries and with a deviation from the business as usual scenario for developing countries. Buffetaut stressed the need for increased investment in technology transfer and research and development. In this regard he spoke about a new 'Marshall Plan' which should be funded primarily by the developed countries. Buffetaut also spoke about the gap between Annex 1 and Non-Annex 1 countries and the efforts needed to close this gap and stressed the important role of civil society in the negotiation process.

Wouter J. Veening, Chairman, Institute for Environmental Security / Chairman, IUCN CEESP Working Group on Environment and Security

Wouter Veening indicated that Poznan is a stop on the way from Bali to Copenhagen and listed four factors that described the Poznan conference as a half way station. The first factor was that the dynamics of the negotiations are such that negotiators were expected to keep their cards close to their chest and that is what they have done. Final decisions on the post Kyoto climate regime will

only be taken in December 2009, at the very end of the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. In Poznan negotiators agreed upon procedures to arrive at these final agreements, but not on the substance.

A second factor was the French decision to hold the European Council meeting in Brussels at the same time as the COP in Poznan. Having negotiations in two locations at the same time made reaching agreements more difficult. At the European Council meeting compromises were struck with regard to auctioning of emission rights, but the 20/20/20 commitments had not been watered down.

A third reason why there are not many concrete results from the Poznan summit is the fact that president elect Obama was not yet in office. The many American key figures present in Poznan, could not be expected to make any commitments at this point.

The credit crisis and the fear of a recession was a fourth and final cause of the limited the willingness of the participants in Poznan to make commitments, but the crisis is, on the other hand, also an opportunity to start a "green deal".

The aforementioned factors do not mean that the summit was a failure. The mood at the summit was very positive and there were many new ideas and much creativity. Differences of opinion were dealt with in an atmosphere co-operation. A number of positive new developments at the COP included the presence of large insurance companies that are currently working with the World Bank to develop adaptation mechanisms, attention for energy efficiency in buildings, work on mechanisms to preserve the world forests, fruitful talks on the design of an adaptation fund and signals that China is on its way to become an important player.

The IES co-organised a side event at the EU pavilion that focussed on the relation between climate change and security with a focus on small island states. In the coming year the IES will be helping to send a powerful signal from the foreign policy and security community to the climate talks asserting that the impact of climate change on international security is another reason for urgent adoption of a new climate agreement.

Olof Ehrenkrona, Ambassador, Senior Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sweden

Ambassador Olof Ehrenkrona who works on the globalization agenda for Sweden indicated that climate change is all about creating conditions for sustainable globalisation. However, he expressed worries that lower oil prices resulting from the economic crisis will cause lower investments in alternative and sustainable energy. In general there is a risk that the economic downturn will be used as an argument to not take the measures needed to fight climate change.

The ambassador indicated that the past week had been a week of confirmation that the global community will take measures and that Europe is willing to play a leading role. One of the important outcomes of the COP was the agreement on financing of the Adaptation Fund which will be activated next year. Ehrenkrona stressed that rich countries must not only take responsibility for their own emission reductions, but that they must also work on reductions in developing countries through financing and technology transfer.

In relation to European Council meeting Ehrenkrona pointed out that reasonable means of calculation are needed in order to be able to compensate those who pay the short term price of the long term measures. Reasonable means of calculation are important because efforts made will be underestimated if sound means to calculate these efforts are not available. This means that the

legitimacy of any climate regime depends on the quality of the calculation methods. When developing these measures it is important to recognise that, from climate change perspective, the location of reduction does not matter.

Ehrenkrona said that “the train” has stayed on track in both Poznan and the European Council meeting in Brussels and that we are some steps closer. At the European Council meeting the EU confirmed 20/20/20 commitments and introduced checkpoints. Ehrenkrona views these checkpoints not as a possibility to crawl back, but as a possibility to make more commitments if needed.

David Steven, River Path Associates

Mr Steven stated that we need to puncture the climate bubble and see the climate negotiations in a wider perspective. This means we need to work on the multilateral reform that is needed not only to deal with climate change, but also to deal with the financial crisis and with international trade. Steven signalled that (progressive) leaders feel that now is the time to create a new global order as was done in 1944, but warns that the current crisis may just as well lead to a breakdown of globalisation. The Doha Round has just come to a halt and we now see countries around the world putting up protectionist barriers.

Resource scarcity and climate change are problems that will confront us for decades to come. We now have a recession that will reduce this resource scarcity in the short term, but this does not affect the need to work on a long term solution. The question we need to address is: what global institutions do we need in 2030? This is a phenomenally difficult problem. The first challenge in answering this question is to create a common language to address the various global challenges we face. Another challenge is that the dynamics of the climate negotiation process are the opposite to those of a game of chess: more and more pieces will come on the board as it nears the end. This makes the game more and more complicated. It means that we will need a more ambitious, more integrated and longer term in our approach if we are to have any chance of success.

Session II: Asia and Copenhagen: Black Carbon & Biochar

Tom Spencer, Vice-Chairman, Institute for Environmental Security

In his presentation Mr Spencer first outlined the increasing importance of Asian players, particularly China and India, in the negotiation processes and then moved on to focus on the effects of soot on climate change, an issue which is particularly important in Asia.

Mr Spencer stressed that climate change is an urgent. It is not a long term problem, as we used to think, because of the possibility of abrupt climate change occurring once certain tipping points are reached. One thing we can do to mitigate climate change directly is limiting the amount of soot in the air particularly in the Himalayas. Soot that enters the atmosphere as a result of burning fossil fuels lands on Himalayan ice caps. It reduces the reflectiveness of the mountains and thereby increases global warming. Soot in the air is, fortunately, an issue we can deal with quickly: utilising the already present scrubbers in Chinese power plants and stimulating the use of more efficient stoves in India, for example, would have an instantaneous positive effect. Soot is not a green house gas and is therefore not included in the current negotiations, but given its effects on the climate it ought to be added to the negotiation pot.

Craig Sams, President, Green & Black's Limited / Advisor, International Biochar Initiative

[Full Presentation Including Slides](#)

Craig Sams discussed agriculture's large historic and ongoing contribution to climate change and looked at how agriculture can become part of the solution instead of part of the problem. Sams explained that in the U.S. in the past 200 years an area of carbon rich soil equal in size to all Europe's arable land has lost more than three quarters of its carbon content, and that similar developments have taken place all over the world. Loss of carbon in the soil occurs because every time farmers plough, the carbon-rich humus of the soils oxidises and floats skywards as carbon dioxide. As a result half of all greenhouse gas emissions between 1850 and 1990 came from agriculture. Only agriculture, given the right incentives, can therefore recapture and store this CO₂ back in the soil.

According to Sams it is possible to build up the carbon content of soil quickly: in 30 years we could replace what we have lost in the past 150 years. Converting biomass into charcoal and using this to fertilise soil is the way to do this. Every tonne of biomass converts to one third of a tonne of pure carbon in charcoal, with only 10 percent of its carbon content used to fuel the process. Using biochar as a fertilizer improves the soil and reduces nitrate leaching, it increases healthy microbiological populations and it reduces the need for irrigation by holding moisture in the soil. The carbon stays in soil for hundreds of years. At the moment, making charcoal is excluded from the Clean Development Mechanism and there are insufficient incentives to produce it. This is a market failure that needs to be corrected. If the carbon markets work properly – and this is dependent on political will – then biochar production offers a way to rebuild fertility in the world's soils, reduce green house gas levels while also reducing the burden on EU and the US taxpayers subsidising agriculture.

Session III: Climate Change, Peace Building & International Security

Henri Winter, Policy Planning and Early Warning Unit of the Council of the European Union

Henri Winter, of the Policy Planning and Early Warning Unit of the Council of the European Union, indicated that the security implications of climate change have been high on the Council agenda throughout 2008. He referred to the Solana Report, in which the High Representative and the Commission analyse the consequences of climate change for international security and to the implementation report on the European Security Strategy in which the security implications of climate change receive ample attention.

The Council is currently working on the implementation of the Solana report and has raised the issue of environment and security in numerous meetings with third countries and international organisations. In addition, The Council has conducted initial region-by-region profiling to identify primary security risks in the regions closest to Europe. Based on consultations and regional profiling, the High Representative has presented a follow-up to the report on Climate Change and International Security with more detailed recommendations in early December 2008.

The follow up report signals that there is a need for more detailed region-by-region analysis of how climate change is likely to affect security around the world. The EU has already conducted initial studies of Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia, and based on these studies it has identified some of the key threats and has offered a number of suggestions for an EU response. The report recommends improvement of early warning mechanisms through inclusion of indicators related to climate change and environmental degradation, through increased engagement with third countries and organisations and by looking further into what must be done in the field of crisis management and conflict prevention in order to deal with the challenges of climate change.

François Roudié, Policy Coordinator on Climate Change, DG RELEX, European Commission

Mr Roudié pointed out that looking at the security dimension of climate change gives a different cost benefit analysis of the climate problem. For this reason it would be good to have the security community involved in the process towards COP 15. Their political traction is needed to reach a good agreement. A lot remains to be done to make the worlds of environment and security work together. Roudié referred to progress made, such as the Security Council address about environment and security by British Foreign Secretary Margaret Becket , but he also mentioned the reluctance of some key countries to address this issue in the Security Council.

Mr Roudié addressed the issue of tipping points and stressed the importance of adaptation measures, pointing out that security issues arise only when adaptation fails. Climate change does not necessarily need to be a hard security issue but only becomes this if we fail to address it adequately. Successful adaptation is directly related to effective governance and requires a complete integration of climate change policy in development cooperation. Integrating climate change into development policy is primarily an issue of adaptation, but mitigation does come in when you look at the emerging economies.

Individual countries should be aware of the security implications of climate change and every country should be conducting research in order to find out how climate change will affect its national interests. Altering a famous phrase from Clemenceau, Roudié finalised his presentation stating that: “climate change is too serious an affair to be left to environmentalists alone”, indicating that getting people from other sectors involved is crucial.

Ronald A. Kingham, Director of the Institute for Environmental Security / Former European Co-ordinator, Transatlantic Environment Dialogue

Mr Kingham gave a brief historic overview of the Transatlantic Environment Dialogue which he likes to characterize as quadrilogues in which the EU and the US government not only met with each other but also with environmental NGO’s and producer and consumer organisations. These organisations were thus given the opportunity to deliver input to EU-US summits. Ronald Kingham went on to explain that the IES is focussing on transatlantic co-operation with regard to an integrated approach of environment, security and sustainable development and announced that the first event covering this theme in 2009 will take place in Washington DC on March 17. Mr Kingham also mentioned a proposal to work on a new report on climate and security in cooperation with CNA in Washington.

Session IV: Towards a New Transatlantic Dialogue on Environment, Security & Sustainable Development

Ulrich Eckle, Energy, Climate Change, Food Safety & Security, US Desk, DG RELEX, European Commission

Ulrich Eckle expresses optimism about the possibilities for progress with regard to climate change. He says that these are exiting times with the Poznan and EU summit just behind us and with a change of administration in the US coming up. Mr Eckle drew attention to some of the personnel changes that are planned for the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency and expressed the hope that the change of the US administration will lead to enhanced cooperation in the coming years. The vehicles for transatlantic cooperation, such as the High Level Dialogue on Climate Change, Energy and Sustainable Development are there already, but they have not been used intensively in the past few years, this is likely to change now.

Eckle pointed out the US was never willing to mention a target in the past, but that it is willing to do so now for the first time. In addition, the US has announced that it will show leadership. Eckle praised the Obama administration's approach for it marries the financial crisis to climate change and aims to retool the US economy in order to put it on a low carbon track. This approach means that the crisis is not necessarily all bad news. Obama is very contagious on climate change, his support for the weatherization of homes, new jobs etcetera allows people to identify with the new climate change agenda.

Louis Bono, Counsellor for Energy, Environment & Technology, US Mission to the EU

Luis Bono indicated that the coming of a new administration will mean some change in the US climate policy but indicated that the current administration is already working on a post Kyoto climate regime. Bono regards Poznan a success as the summit resulted in a work plan and because the vital role of technology has been acknowledged.

Bono expects that the new administration's approach to climate change will only be different with regard to implementation. The Obama administration has set ambitious goals, but getting the necessary legislation through Congress will be a big challenge. Domestically, Obama is already putting pressure on Congress to come up with cap and trade legislation and threatens to have the Environmental Protection Agency design it if Congress fails to do so. Internationally Obama is expected to focus on the major emitters. Obama has announced that he will create a global energy forum of major emitters which essentially consists of the member countries of the G8+5. Obama clearly demands emerging economies to undertake binding actions, which is in effect the demand the outgoing administration has made for the past years. Bono is optimistic in this regard, pointing out that the Philippines, Mexico, Brazil and South Korea have in the past months indicated that they are willing to make such commitments. Bono finalises his presentation saying that if we are going to succeed we will have to get past the current phase of finger pointing and mistrust. If we can do this we will have a very fruitful and productive year.