

# [Africa-Europe Alliance: first projects kicked off just three months after launch](#)

At the [High-Level Forum Africa-Europe](#) today in Vienna, hosted jointly by the Austrian Presidency of the EU, notably by Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, and Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda and the Chairman of the African Union for 2018, President Jean-Claude **Juncker** reiterated Europe's ambition for a true and fair partnership among equals between Africa and Europe. President Juncker presented the first results of the [Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs](#), just three months after its launch. The Alliance aims to deepen the economic and trade relations between the two continents, in order to create sustainable jobs and growth.

European Commission President Jean-Claude **Juncker** said: *"Europe and Africa share a long history and a bright future. This is why I proposed a new Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs, to help attract both European and African investment and create 10 million jobs in Africa over the next five years. Translating words into action, we have already taken a series of measures to bring our ambitions to life."*

The President is accompanied to the High-Level Forum by Vice-President Andrus **Ansip**, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes **Hahn**, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development Neven **Mimica**, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Phil **Hogan** and Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society Mariya **Gabriel**.

The Africa-Europe Alliance, announced by President **Juncker** in his [2018 State of the Union Address](#), focuses on four key areas. Three months on, work is already well underway in each:

## **1. Strategic Investment and Job Creation**

The [EU External Investment Plan](#) aims to raise significant sustainable investments in Africa and European neighbourhood countries by 2020. From the €44 billion announced, [programmes already in the pipeline](#) will mobilise **€37.1 billion of investments**.

New projects were announced today:

- An EU guarantee ([NASIRA Risk-Sharing Facility](#)), the first of its kind under the EU External Investment Plan, will use worth **€75 million** of EU funds to leverage up to **€750 million of investments for entrepreneurs in Sub-Saharan Africa and the EU's southern neighbourhood**. Alone this is expected to create 800,000 jobs and benefit those who usually struggle to access affordable loans, such as small and medium sized enterprises, internally displaced people, refugees, returnees, women and young people.

- A new [Agri-Business Capital fund](#) worth **€45 million** will support smallholder agriculture by increasing access to finance for individual smallholder farmers. It is expected to attract more than **€200 million in investments** and benefit as many as 700,000 households in rural areas.
- To support the **EU's southern neighbourhood**, a programme worth **€61.1 million** will support solar power plants in **Morocco** and **€46.8 million** will be invested in depolluting the Kitchener Drain in the Nile Delta region in **Egypt**.

## 2. Investment in Education and Matching Skills and Jobs

Since 2015, the Erasmus+ programme supported 16,000 exchanges of African students and staff from African Universities to come to Europe on short-term exchanges. With new Erasmus+ calls ongoing, the EU is well on track to deliver on its announced 2020 target of reaching 35,000 exchanges.

## 3. Business Environment and Investment Climate

In 2018 alone, the European Union has committed over **€540 million** to support business and investment climate reforms— significantly exceeding the Africa-Europe Alliance's commitment to increase European Union support up to €300-350 million per year for 2018-2020.

**Public-private dialogues** to promote [Sustainable Business for Africa \(SB4A\)](#) have been established in the following African countries: Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia and Uganda. Similar dialogues in 25 additional African countries are currently being prepared. This will help to boost decent job creation, in particular for young people and women. The dialogues were launched in Abidjan during the [EU-Africa business](#) forum in November 2017.

## 4. Economic Integration and Trade

The European Union is committed to support the creation of a **African Continental Free Trade Area**, and has notably announced **€50 million** of support. A first step was taken today with a [€3 million programme signed with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa](#) to develop national implementation strategies for the continental free trade area. The establishment of an African trade observatory is also planned, and will be a key pillar of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

### Working Together in Strategic Areas

A key component of the Africa-Europe Alliance is close collaboration between both sides. Four joint task forces have been set up:

- The [rural Africa task force](#) today presented its [recommendations](#) on how best to develop Africa's agriculture, food sector and rural economy.
- The [digital economy task force](#) met for the first time on 18 December in Vienna, on the occasion of the High-Level Africa-Europe forum. Its aim is to develop by June 2019 proposals for concrete actions and projects that support the integration of digital markets in Africa, boosting

public and private investment, improving the business environment and investment climate as well as the development of digital skills.

- The **energy task force** was launched at the Africa Investment Forum in Johannesburg in November 2018. It brings together key players in the sustainable energy sector from the public and private sectors of both Europe and Africa.
- A **task force for transport** is currently being set up.

#### **For more information**

[Speech by President Juncker at the High-Level Forum Africa-Europe\\*](#)

[Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs](#)

[Factsheet – Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs](#)

[EU External Investment Plan](#)

[Webrelease – Africa-Europe Alliance: EU supports the African Continental Free Trade Area with €50 million](#)

[Webrelease – Africa-Europe Alliance: EU to contribute €45 million to boost agri-business investments and create jobs in rural areas](#)

[Webrelease – EU External Investment Plan: Commission and FMO sign the first guarantee agreement to unlock financing for jobs](#)

\* Updated on 18/12/2018 at 15:38

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## **EIOPA updates representative portfolios to calculate volatility adjustments to the Solvency II risk-free interest rate term structures**

Today, the European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA) published updated representative portfolios that will be used for calculation of the volatility adjustments (VA) to the relevant risk-free interest rate term structures for Solvency II.

EIOPA will start using these updated representative portfolios for the calculation of the VA end of March 2019, which will be published at the beginning of April 2019.

EIOPA publishes the updated representative portfolios now, i.e. three months in advance in order to allow (re)insurers sufficient time to prepare for this change.

The updated portfolios are based on the end-of-2017 annual reporting templates as reported by European (re)insurance companies to their national supervisory authorities. The updated portfolios enable more accurate reflection of the impact of market volatility under the Solvency II framework.

EIOPA is revising the representative portfolios on a yearly basis with the next update being scheduled for the end of 2019 according to art. 193 of the [Technical Documentation](#).

The representative portfolios are available on EIOPA's website under "[Background Material / Updated representative portfolios for the calculation of the volatility adjustment \(applicable end-of-March 2019\)](#)".

### **Background**

The volatility adjustments are derived from spreads of representative portfolios of assets. The representative portfolios are derived in accordance with Article 49 of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2015/35.

The volatility adjustment is a measure to ensure the appropriate treatment of insurance products with long-term guarantees under Solvency II. (Re)insurers are allowed to adjust the RFR to mitigate the effect of short-term volatility of bond spreads on their solvency position. In that way, the volatility adjustment prevents pro-cyclical investment behaviour of (re)insurers.

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## **[Ceremonial lecture by President Donald Tusk following the award of the Honorary Doctorate from the Technical University of Dortmund](#)**

### **Press contacts**

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It is a great privilege to be able to say a few words in such an important

moment for your community and in front of such a wonderful audience. I said, "your community", although of course, for a couple of hours now, I have the right and the honour to call it, "our community", as a freshly nominated doctor honoris causa of your – oh, excuse me – of our university. During that ceremony, I referred to the maxim of the first honorary doctor of the Technical University of Dortmund, president Johannes Rau: "To reconcile, not divide" and I said: "The European Union – the way I understand it – is founded on positive thinking and positive values. There would not be our Europe – and there will not be our Europe – without reconciliation, without solidarity and without mutual respect." And I added that "you don't need to graduate in engineering or architecture from the Technical University of Dortmund to understand that in politics, bridges are more important than walls, though we know how much easier and faster it is to raise a wall, than to build a bridge. I am convinced that this is the reason why you have taken the trouble of studying: to avoid the temptation of simplifying and cutting corners. That in the spiritual, but also the political dimension, you will always be builders of bridges, and not walls."

These words were inspired by the whole of my life's experience, in which – whether I wanted it, or not – politics was still present, together with its most dramatic symptoms and expressions. And everything began exactly on 16 December, 48 years ago, in my hometown of Gdańsk.

It was 1970, I was 13, when tragic events played out in front of my eyes. The police and the army opened fire on protesting workers. Many of them died, hundreds were wounded, many vehicles and buildings were burned, including tanks and the communist party headquarters. The streets of Gdańsk became a school of life, and a first lesson in politics, which I will never forget. I was very young, but I understood instinctively what was going on, and who was right; where good was, and where evil was; who was telling the truth, and who was telling lies. It was an unusually exciting lesson, filled with emotions, rage and hope, all at the same time.

It was then that I found out for the first time that those who are right don't always win. That lies and evil can triumph over truth and good. I fully identified with those beaten and humiliated. At the same time, I lived through these events as if they were some kind of holiday, the first big, adulthood adventure, which briefly interrupted the terrifying monotony of the *status quo*.

Many years later, when – as a student – I organised the structures of illegal opposition to the communist rule, I noticed that the memory of those past events took on the characteristics of a myth, which heavily influenced the imaginations of the participants in our meetings. As a young historian, I was dealing at the time with the role of myths and legends in the Polish politics of the 1930s, and already back then I had no doubt that emotions, symbols and simplifications motivate people much more than rational arguments and programmes. That they can be very useful, but also very dangerous, especially if mythologies begin to dominate in the public sphere. Ernst Cassirer wrote about this. According to him, the politicians of the Weimar Republic made a crucial mistake in being occupied only with improving the economic situation of the masses, tackling unemployment and inflation. At the same time, being

sober thinking, rational individuals, they remained completely blind to the explosive force of political myths. This great mistake caused a catastrophe. When the political and intellectual elites of the German democracy began to notice what was at stake, when they began to understand the nature of the new political myths, it was already too late. They lost the battle before they realised that it had just started.

Let us return to my story. The legend of the December protest turned out to be a very effective founding myth of Solidarność. Before the movement was established, in the second half of the 1970s, we organised illegal demonstrations every 16 December, outside the Gdańsk shipyard. That is when I met Lech Wałęsa – no one knew back then that he himself would soon become a legend. Solidarność mobilised millions of people against the regime, who – despite realities such as the presence of the Soviet army – decided to act. They were guided by the eternal motto of Gdańsk: *nec temere, nec timide*, neither rashly, nor timidly. It was that synthesis of emotions and reason, synthesis of myth and plan, synthesis of symbols and pragmatism, that brought victory.

Of course, not straight away. In the meantime, there was martial law in Poland and, again, the 16 December, 37 years ago, the communists again shot at workers and demonstrators. 9 coalminers on strike were killed by the police in Katowice. In Gdańsk, despite tanks in the streets and tear gas, despite the knowledge that authorities were shooting at people again, one hundred thousand demonstrators surrounded the shipyard and the monument for the victims of December 1970, in order to remember them, pray for them and lay flowers. Such was the force of the legend of December.

People will not fight with full determination for procedures or abstract ideas. They will be ready to get involved in public affairs and sacrifice a lot only if emotions are sparked in them. They can be good or bad emotions. They can erupt in poor as well as rich countries. Money is important to people, but it is not everything.

Today in Europe, we are witnessing a wave of populist rhetoric with a xenophobic and authoritarian twist, both in old as well as new democracies. This trend is visible, regardless of the degree of wealth in societies, their culture and history. The crisis – in so many areas of western civilisation, including outside our continent – of classic liberal democracy, attacked and increasingly effectively weakened by various, leftist and – what is more common today – right-wing demagogues, stems not only from non-economic, but also non-rational sources. It reflects the force of myths and symbols which these demagogues uphold, using them to tempt masses of followers and disorientated citizens.

It comes the easier to them, the harder it is to distinguish between lies and the truth, between fake-news and news. It is here that the present-day Zeitgeist is expressed. The facts are losing against imagined concepts, experts and academics are losing against extremely astute demagogues, particularly in cyber-space. Unfortunately, today it is they who have the power over emotions, even if the facts and arguments are against them.

Liberal democracy and the European Union – grand projects in the moral and practical dimension – are not able today to rouse such emotions or release feelings, as national myths do, myths brought up again at every opportunity. Cool persuasion, common sense, and even economic interests stand no chance in confrontation with passion.

Those are right, who stress that the need for myths is timeless. We cannot replace it with cold calculation. But, as not only my experience shows, myths and symbols don't have to serve a bad cause only. European democrats cannot surrender to fatalism, they cannot let emotions be weapons only in the hands of political charlatans. They have to stand up to them, also in the mythical symbolical sphere. If the only thing on our side is knowledge, and on their side – faith, we will lose. This is the first lesson I take from my Decembers.

The second is that the new generations will not accept the status quo forever, even if it is clearly better than the past, and even if they don't have ideas for a better future. One of the main reasons why I became a rebel in my youth was – as I mentioned already – an unbearable sense of boredom. From time to time, people crave change more than comfort. For too long we have lived in times of *grand ennui*, *die grosse Langweile* as someone said, commenting on the protests of the French *gilets jaunes*, the yellow vests. We will not stop this desire by repeating our slogans about stabilisation. Taking risks, even without rational reasons, is the eternal right of the young. Whether it will be destructive or creative, depends to a large degree on the quality of the political leadership.

And this is the third lesson from my Decembers. Jacek Kuroń, one of the legendary leaders of the Polish democratic opposition, once said: "Don't burn down party committees, set up your own". The committee was the common name for the headquarters of the communist party. In 1970, such committees burned in Gdańsk, among other places, which gave the authorities a pretext for brutal repressions. As he led *Solidarność*, Lech Wałęsa always remembered this commandment. Politicians who take action unaware of what results it will bring, are always a big threat. On the centenary of the end of the First World War, it is worth reminding ourselves of the story of its beginning, with all those sleepwalkers in power, who – having the best intentions and a hopelessly weak imagination – led Europe to catastrophe. Max Weber wrote about the ethics of responsibility. Today, I would like to dedicate his words to some of the contemporary leaders on both sides of the Atlantic, and in particular to the authors of Brexit.

Today we need leaders who understand that their role is not only having technocratic skill and the ability to stay in power. We need leaders who can use the potential of emotions to defend our fundamental values. Leaders, who not only understand the scale of the threats, but who can also prevent them. Herfried Münkler once wrote a fantastic essay, "Odysseus and Cassandra". Cassandra, who knew very well what would happen, who warned everyone against the impending catastrophe, but no one listened to her. Today, we have many politicians and intellectuals who feel comfortable in the role of forewarners, as prophetic as Cassandra, and equally helpless. And there are so few Odysseuses, smart (that's how Homer described Odysseus), efficient, and

when it is necessary – ruthless, and capable of sacrifices. Odysseus, practical to the extreme, understands the meaning of symbols and irrational elements in politics. A few weeks before the construction of the great horse – writes Münkler – Odysseus gets into Troy through the cloaca. Disguised as a beggar, stinking of excrement, together with Diomedes, he steals the statue of Pallas Athena, in order to deprive Troy of the last remains of divine protection. As the seer Helenus foretold Odysseus earlier, the city can be conquered only when the statue disappears. Let us listen, therefore, to Cassandras, but choose Odysseuses as leaders.

The fourth lesson from my Decembers – the most important to me personally – is the experience of violence, lies and lawlessness. An experience known by all those who have lived in places where undemocratic powers are beyond any control. Where you can beat and kill a man without any reason, where lies become omnipresent, where rights apply only to those in power, while citizens have only obligations.

That is why, when today I hear European politicians, who wipe out all the tradition of liberal democracy, for whom human rights, minority rights, government within the law, the precedence of the constitution over the will of rulers, and free media are empty slogans, I loudly say: no. Because I know what these principles mean, remembering still what life is like for a man deprived of rights, who is at the mercy – or lack of mercy – of those in power.

Europe is the best place on Earth, and the European Union is the best political invention in our history – as long as we stand by these principles. That's what my heart and mind tell me, my knowledge and my faith. And being with you here today, I know that I am not alone. Thank you.

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## [Acceptance speech by President Donald Tusk upon receiving the Honorary Doctorate from the Technical University of Dortmund](#)

### **Press contacts**

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I am honoured, proud and moved by this special distinction bestowed upon me today. Especially that you made this decision on the 50th anniversary of your university. My emotion is even greater since I have always sympathised with Borussia Dortmund, and of course – like almost all Germans and Poles, I am much more interested in football than politics. *Ich bin ein Dortmunder* – every typical Polish football fan might say without hesitation. I don't know if you know that from the Poles – past and present – who have played for Borussia, you could make up quite a decent first eleven. Few today remember that Dortmund has been not only Piszczek, Lewandowski, Błaszczykowski, but also Ebi Smolarek or, in the older days, Heinz Kwiatkowski, Kapituliński, Schlebrowski, Kelbassa, Michałek and Niepekło. This is why today I am happy together with you: that you are top of the league, that you have won the *Revierderby* and that you are a whole 9 points above, well... you know who!

Stop! – my wife would shout, if she were here, as she always repeats that I shouldn't reduce my whole life to football. But I started off with football not only because I am crazy about it. To be honest, I always dreamt of a career as a football player, not a politician, but I simply lacked the talent. However, I have played long enough as an amateur, and I have been involved long enough as a fan of my beloved club, Lechia Gdańsk (by the way, we also won our derby and are also league leaders!), to understand the phenomenon and significance of the emotions that come with tribal conflicts, the phenomenon of the brutal division between "us" and "them". A division in which thinking is replaced by feelings, where rational arguments give way to myths, symbols and colours – tribal colours, club colours or national colours, and where the leader is more important than views and values. I have experienced how easy it is to fall into the trap of simplified identity, built on the negation of other communities. Other – and therefore alien, and therefore hostile. The division between "us" and "them" justifies the worst emotions, including hatred and contempt. As a very young man, I fell into this trap more than once, and I must admit that I wasn't the best-behaved of boys. I observed from close-up the process (in fact, I took part in it) of spreading certain behaviours from the stadium to the street, from sport to politics. And a lot of time had to pass, before I understood that the job of every individual in the public sphere, in politics and in social life, is to avoid, or at least limit, conflict and violence.

It wasn't an easy process. I remember that, back in the eighties, when we came out into the streets to demonstrate against the communists, and fight with the police, I rebelled, deep in my heart, against the words of the Polish Pope: "overcome evil with good". Because to overcome – I thought – was to defeat and destroy the opponent. And that the only sensible answer to violence, is violence. It turned out, however, that real victory means not giving in to this logic. The experience of Polish *Solidarność*, my experience – similarly to the beautiful stories of Ghandi, Mandela and others – has shown that you can win by rejecting the tragic, truly devilish alternative: either "us" or "them". Because if we don't reject it, as Timothy Snyder has noted, the first and most important matter in politics becomes the question: "who are we, and who are they?" rather than: "what is the world like and what we can do about it?" When we accept that politics is about "us and them", only about "us and them", we also accept that fear and anxiety form the basis

of politics. Some think that such emotions can be the source of their power; the truth is that when we surrender to them, we become – against our will – an easy and malleable material in the hands of potential autocrats. I can see this – in all its clarity – in Europe today. Please don't ask me about names, because I won't say them anyway – and besides, you know full well who I'm talking about.

The informal anthem of *Solidarność* used to be a song called *Prayer at Sunrise* by Natan Tenenbaum, a Polish Jew, who had to flee Poland as a result of the anti-Semitic campaign unleashed by the communist government exactly 50 years ago, when your university was being founded. We sang the lyrics:

“Oh Lord, deliver me from contempt, and from hatred shield me God”, slowly learning the real meaning of these words. The fact that millions of people believed in these words, and thousands believed that you can fight without resorting to violence, became our first, and most important, gateway to Europe.

Because the European Union – the way I understand it – is founded on positive thinking and positive values. There would not be our Europe – and there will not be our Europe – without reconciliation, without solidarity and without mutual respect.

You don't need to graduate in engineering or architecture from the Technical University of Dortmund to understand that in politics, bridges are more important than walls, though we know how much easier and faster it is to raise a wall, than to build a bridge. I am convinced that this is the reason why you have taken the trouble of studying: to avoid the temptation of simplifying and cutting corners. That in the spiritual, but also the political dimension, you will always be builders of bridges, and not walls.

Once again, I would like to thank you very much for this distinction and beautiful laudation. Listening to a laudation about yourself is always the most pleasant part of such ceremonies. For a moment, you can believe that you are much better than you really are. And, please allow me, dear friends, to accept today not only the noble title of *honoris causa* doctorate, but also to uphold the maxim of your first ever honorary laureate, president Johannes Rau: “To reconcile, not divide”. Thank you.

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**[UN Climate talks: EU plays instrumental role in making the Paris](#)**

# Agreement operational

The Paris rulebook will enable the Parties to the Paris Agreement to implement, track and progressively enhance their contributions to tackling climate change, in order to meet the Agreement's long-term goals.

Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy Miguel **Arias Cañete** said: *"In Europe, and working united as Europeans, we have reached a balanced deal on the rules to turn the Paris Agreement into action. The EU played an instrumental role in reaching this outcome, working with allies from both developed and developing countries and with major economies, in particular China, to raise ambition and strengthen global efforts to fight climate change. We have responded to the urgency of science by acknowledging positively the IPCC special report on global warming of 1.5°C. This was a key ask for the EU and its allies. The Paris rulebook is fundamental for enabling and encouraging climate action at all levels worldwide – and success here also means success for multilateralism and the rules-based global order. The EU will continue to lead by turning our commitments into concrete action, leaving no one behind in the transition to a climate-neutral future; and inspiring other countries to make this necessary transition. I would like to thank Minister Kurtyka and the Polish COP Presidency for a job well done, and to Minister Köstinger and her team from the Austrian Presidency for helping the EU stay united and leading."*

## **EU action**

The EU's nationally determined contribution (NDC) under the Paris Agreement is to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by at least 40% by 2030 compared to 1990, under its wider 2030 climate and energy framework. All key legislation for implementing the 2030 emissions target has already been adopted, including the increased EU's 2030 targets on [renewable energy](#) and [energy efficiency](#) – which if fully implemented could lead to an EU GHG emissions cut of some 45% by 2030, the Commission has estimated – as well as the [modernisation of the EU Emissions Trading System](#) and [2030 targets](#) for all Member States to cut emissions in sectors such as transport, buildings, agriculture and waste.

Back in November 2016 – just before the Paris Agreement entered into force – the Commission presented the [Clean Energy for All Europeans Package](#), aimed at setting the most advanced regulatory framework that will make the European energy sector more secure, more market-oriented and more sustainable. We acknowledge that this transition is going to be more difficult for some regions than others – notably those regions, where the economy is based on coal production.

The Commission, together with these legislative proposals, outlined a [special initiative to work with coal and carbon-intensive regions in transition](#) so that they can also benefit from the clean energy transition. The clean energy transition is a transition for all Europeans and its socio-economic impacts must be carefully managed.

EU ambition also goes beyond 2030. Following the invitation by the EU leaders, the Commission on 28 November presented a [strategic long-term vision](#) for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate-neutral European economy by 2050.

The strategic vision, which follows wide stakeholder consultation and takes into account the recent IPCC special report on 1.5°C, is an ambitious vision for ensuring a prosperous, modern, competitive and secure economy, providing sustainable growth and jobs and improving the quality of life of EU citizens.

The strategic vision, which the Commission presented to global partners at COP24, will kick-start an EU-wide debate which should allow the EU to adopt a long-term strategy and submit it to the UNFCCC by 2020. To this end, the European Council [invites](#) the Council to work on the elements outlined in the Communication.

The EU also remains committed to the collective global goal to mobilise USD 100 billion a year by 2020 and through to 2025 to [finance climate action](#) in developing countries, from a variety of public and private sources. In 2017, the EU, its Member States and the European Investment Bank together provided a total EUR 20.4 billion in climate finance, around a 50% increase from 2012.

## Key outcomes

The Paris Agreement rulebook contains detailed rules and guidelines for implementing the landmark global accord adopted in 2015, covering all key areas including transparency, finance, mitigation and adaptation.

Key COP24 outcomes include:

- The first ever universal system for the Parties to track and report progress in climate action, which provides flexibilities to those countries that genuinely need it. This will inspire all Parties to improve their practices over time and communicate the progress made in clear and comparable terms.
- A good, consensual outcome on adaptation issues. The Parties now have guidance and a registry to communicate their actions as regards to adapting to the impacts of climate change.
- As to the global stocktake process, the next moment to review collective action, which the EU considered vital for the Paris Agreement, the result provides a solid basis for further elaboration on the details of the process. The global stocktake will invite Parties to regularly review progress and the level of ambition based on the latest available science.
- Finally, with the decisions on finance and technology, there is now a solid package that the EU trusts will provide reassurances to our partners on our commitment to continued global solidarity and support.

## Background

The 24th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – ‘COP24’ – took place from 2-14 December in Katowice,

Poland, presided over by the Polish government. It brought together ministers and government officials, as well as a wide range of stakeholder representatives.

The Paris Agreement, adopted in December 2015, sets out a global action plan to put the world on track to avoid dangerous climate change by limiting global warming to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature rise to 1.5°C. It entered into force on 4 November 2016. 195 UNFCCC Parties have signed the Agreement and 184 have now ratified it.

**Read more:**

[Paris Agreement](#)

[Long-term vision for a prosperous, modern competitive and climate neutral economy by 2050](#)

[European Council Conclusions 13-14 December 2018](#)